



ELECTRONIC DEATH REGISTRATION UPDATE

Dear Valued Members of the Virginia Funeral Directors Association:

Please review the following information provided by your Legislative Committee representative, Jay McIntyre, and our lobbying team. First, a reminder as to why the EDRS Stakeholder group exists and why VFDA's participation in it is critical to our members.

Years ago, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Division of Vital Records (DVR) decided to begin the process of developing an Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) for the Commonwealth of Virginia. VDH and DVR ultimately decided to design their own EDRS internally, removing VITA from the process and rejecting the purchase of an "off the shelf" EDRS to be modified to meet Virginia-specific requirements.

The Virginia General Assembly funded the project and VDH and DVR did talk with members of VFDA and physicians as they developed the system. However, upon rolling it out November 1, 2014, there were some issues with user-friendliness and lack of participation by both funeral service professionals and physicians, making the system essentially more of a burden than a benefit. Efforts to work through the issues strained the relationship with VDH and DVR and VFDA took a decidedly pro-active stance to move things forward by addressing the issues with the Virginia General Assembly.

Initially, VFDA sought to require that EDRS be used by physicians and funeral service professionals; however, the General Assembly rejected the legislation as a "mandate" they were unwilling to submit stakeholders to, especially when the system was not working well.

Following that, the VFDA Legislative Committee and lobbying team became creative and in the 2016 Legislative Session asked for language in the budget that would require VDH and DVR to convene an EDRS Stakeholders group to address the concerns surrounding the appropriate filing of death certificates in Virginia.

Following that legislative session, VDH and DVR responded to a federal grant, which also required that they set up a stakeholders group and begin marketing the EDRS to users. There were several meetings, but the final ones for 2017 were not held, and they picked up the meeting schedule this spring.

Below are the combined notes, in minute format, for your review.

EDRS Stakeholders Minutes

April 26, 2018

Start time 1:00 Sharp

- Committee planning to meet every other month until the end of the year. Looking towards end of June and then the end of August/first of September to work cooperatively with VFDA/VMA on legislation for 2019
- Field Service employees are getting Hospitals signed up
 - 4 total employees
 - Successfully added Bath County Hospital

- Spotsylvania Hospital in process
- A Tidewater Funeral Home held a lunch and learn with VDH and invited over 150 Doctors
 - Had over 50 Sign up at meeting
- Providers of grant “pleased” with usage of grant money
 - Final report to be released in May
- Update on SB309/HB1158
 - Usage of EDRS by Hospice
 - Out of State Doctors can now sign DCs – VDH would like to have Drs. use EDRS when possible
 - VDH Interprets EDRS as mandatory Funeral Homes to submit DCs
- VDH is aware of meeting between MSV/VFDA and Sen. McClellan prior to August 1. She had requested a letter by August 1 providing an update on these stakeholder conversations, all in response to her mandatory EDRS legislation from the 2018 session.
 - Meeting Mid-Late June?
 - Many nursing homes lacking technology to complete DCs electronically
 - Some nursing homes claiming to not even have computers
- As of July 1 OCME will no longer provide paper DCs unless FH out of state
 - Question raised by VMA about transporting across state lines
 - I reminded him they needed to acquire a transit permit (He said they stopped at a sheriff’s office and got one)
- VMA requesting letter be sent to neighboring state associations to alert them of the change in DC Process from OCME
- Teaching Hospitals up and running
 - MCV started implementation on April 1 and has around 450 signed up
 - UVA has over 550 signed up
 - Need to make sure VDH sends VFDA a copy of the letter VDH sent the General Assembly earlier this year on implementation at teaching hospitals.
- Since signup process has started online 10 FDs and 425 Doctors have signed up
- Upcoming EDRS Enhancements
 - Process to unlock account
 - A code sent via text or email and answering security question to unlock acct then password change required
 - Process similar to what banks are using

- Changes coming to length of time before lockout occurs
- Embedding/Linking EDRS & EHR
 - Trying to make one simple sign on to both systems
 - Linking EDRS with Birth Records and EHR possible but not a simple change
 - May use budget request for expense of change
 - Trying to make the link seamless
 - MSV “Link would drive usage”
 - VDH would work with hospital chains to match their system with EDRS (Epic etc....)
- Usage has increased with Chrome addition
- New electronic signup process has helped increase usage
 - VDH working to eliminate some of the “details” keeping a signup from being successful
- File DCs anywhere has worked well through first 9 months of usage
- Two major changes coming to EDRS
 - Change in Work Flow
 - FD Ability to de-certify EDRS Certificates and Drop to Paper Certificates
- Change in Work Flow & De-Certify closely linked
 - Doctor will sign DC and then the DC will be sent back to the Funeral director for final review
 - If changes made to any information, Doctor gets a notification of changes made to dc
 - FD will have to click on Case Summary page to submit completed DC to VDH
 - Also on case summary page is the option to De-Certify
 - Funeral director will have 24 hours (in keeping with what flexibility the doctors have been given) to review and then submit DC to VDH – If not completed, DC will automatically submit
 - FD will have 24 hour window to de-certify DC also
 - If Key Changes made, SSN will have to be re-verified
 - In the summary section of SSN Verification changes also shown if any
 - FD must provide reason (just as the case is now) to de-activate
 - When DC comes back to the FH after signing, ANY FD can review and submit; that FD becomes the signer of the DC
 - New notifications available
- Still working out plans on how Decedent Affairs can Change DC

- Deciding if DA office has ability to change, or if Dr. has to make change
- Testing to begin around first week of June
 - I am compiling a list of Testers (Dan Chapman, Lindsey Stone, Myself, Dr. Kent Folsom, others to be added)
 - Hope is to test funeral directors with single and multiple locations and different kinds of Physicians
- OCME DCs cannot be de-certified
- List of proposed changes to EDRS System from VFDA Members
 - **If Not Born in VA, why do we need a Query Screen?** Query Screen is needed even if birth did not occur in VA to ensure DC hasn't been started by someone else (Doctor or another FD)
 - **Why doesn't the Mother and Father Name carry over if not Found in System?** Changes can be made to adjust that; has been suggested before; I also explained at this point to those listening, how to search and find the person in the system...most of the time it works
 - For Male deaths: Search by first and last name of deceased and first and last name of father. Less is more, filling all the details in the search area will not find the individual. EVER.
 - For Female Deaths: Search by First name and use the Maiden name of the deceased as her last name. Do not complete the maiden name box with her maiden name. And then by her father's name also. Most times this yields the result. Do not forget to change the Last name to the correct last name. Females will not be found in the system by their married last name because it is not the name on the birth certificate.
 - **If Incorrect ME is chosen from list, why can't funeral directors take ownership back and re-submit to correct ME?** Simple change can be made to make this occur.
 - **On the Request MC Page, could a preferred telephone number be listed for the Dr.?** A lot of Drs. prefer we call their office when we submit a DC to them so their office staff is on the lookout for it. They have to provide a contact number upon signup, adding a box to that information screen would be a simple fix.
 - **After the doctor has ownership for 24 hours without signing the DC, can a reminder email be sent?** Yes, should be possible through the notifications
 - **Can FH that starts DC for anatomical be notified and have access to State File information to get copies instead of having to call office?** Yes, should also be fixable through notifications
 - Questions regarding OCME paperwork I did not get to finish asking...Dr. Gormley chimed in about their meeting and they are working on details.
 - **As Facility Administrator, why can't they see who they "oversee" in a list?** Small change can be made to allow the FUA to see a full list of the users they are in charge of. Should be a minor fix to allow for that.
 - **Question on whether it might be possible to embed EDRS within physicians' EHR.** VDH would also like to do this with birth certificates, and DHP is already doing this with

prescription monitoring. VDH did mention that one of the major barriers is cost because they would likely need to hire a software vendor, so there may need to be a budget request if it were truly of interest.

- **Transit Permit needed for Cremation burial out of state?** This opened a can of worms...VDH has different interpretation of final disposition. They feel as if a final disposition occurs if cremated remains are buried, but do not feel as if the crematory is final disposition in that case. Lynne Helmick and Corie Tillman Wolf feel differently...matter not fully determined as of the end of the meeting, and VDH will follow up with OAG.
- **Adding DC application to forms page?** We discussed adding the DC application to the forms page and if DC is dropped to paper, the form would be available as soon as the DC is dropped. If EDRS certificate, the form would be available upon assigning of the state file #. Form would also have the state file # on it when fully electronic so FH can fax to Local HD to get copies. No time frame as of yet.
- **After hiring and training staff, Amendment turnaround is 11 days.** DVR is aware that they need to become more customer-focused. They say they have made great strides in reducing backlog on things like amendments and other funeral director needs, but they are often still overwhelmed.

Meeting adjourned 2:58 PM