



**KAISER PERMANENTE®**

Northwest Permanente, P.C.  
Physicians & Surgeons

Before the House Committee on Health Care  
House Bill 2093—Vital Statistics

Bruce A. Bishop, Senior Counsel  
Northwest Permanente, P. C., Physicians and Surgeons  
February 27, 2013

Please accept this testimony on behalf of Northwest Permanente, P. C., Physicians and Surgeons, a multi-specialty group practice comprised of over 1,100 physicians and allied clinicians responsible for the medical care of Kaiser Permanente enrollees in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

House Bill 2093 proposes a number of changes to current law concerning Oregon public health and vital statistics requirements. Our interest today focuses on one relatively minor, but important, issue addressed by the bill.

*Current* Oregon law requires that a death certificate for a person who dies in Oregon be signed by an Oregon physician (or other health licensee). This requirement results from a combination of the definition of “physician” in ORS 432.005 (12) [“. . . a person authorized or licensed under the laws of this state to practice medicine . . . .” Page 2, line 21 of the printed bill] with the provisions of ORS 432.307 (3) [“The physician . . . in charge of the care of the patient for the illness or condition that resulted in death shall complete, sign and return the medical certification of death . . . .” Page 18, line 34 of the printed bill.]

For Northwest Permanente physicians who practice in Longview, Washington, this means that they can sign death certificates for their patients who die in Oregon only if they are also licensed to practice medicine in Oregon.<sup>1</sup> Attached to this testimony is a copy of correspondence one of our clinicians received in January 2011, when we became aware of this quirk in Oregon law.

HB 2093 will allow physicians and other clinicians licensed to practice in states adjoining Oregon to sign death certificates for their patients who die in Oregon. See the new definition of “medical certifier” [“. . . means a physician, physician assistant or nurse practitioner licensed under the laws of this state or under the laws of Washington, Idaho

---

<sup>1</sup> The Kaiser Permanente medical office in Longview may be the closest site for Kaiser Permanente enrollees who live in Columbia or Clatsop counties on the west side of the Columbia River. Oregon residents in these areas often seek medical care in Washington State.

or California who has treated a decedent within the 12 months preceding death.”<sup>2</sup> Page 4, line 7.]

We urge your support of the proposed changes in HB 2093 concerning who can sign death certificates for their patients.

I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

Thank you for your consideration.

Attachment (1)

---

<sup>22</sup> While Nevada adjoins Oregon too, that state’s clinicians are not specifically recognized in the bill.

January 19, 2011

John Shaw  
1230 7th Avenue  
Longview, WA 98632

Dear Medical Certifier:

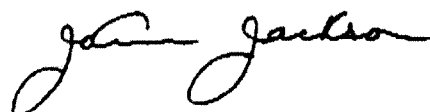
In past years, Oregon's Center for Health Statistics - Vital Records, has accepted Certificates of Death signed by a medical certifier with an active medical license in a bordering state, but not licensed in Oregon. This practice is no longer acceptable. Oregon law requires a medical certifier to have an active Oregon medical license to sign an Oregon Certificate of Death.

Effective immediately, if you are a medical certifier (physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner) from a bordering state and have a patient who died in Oregon, you must have an Oregon medical certifier sign the certificate or you must have an active Oregon medical license. The exception to this practice is medical certifiers signing on behalf of US Veterans Health Administration or Indian Health Services offices. These medical certifiers may sign Oregon Death Certificates.

We apologize for any inconvenience you may experience with this law, especially if you have been a medical certifier from a bordering state who has previously signed Oregon Certificates of Death.

If you have any questions regarding this law, contact me at the number listed above. Thank you for your help with this matter. Death Certificates are important documents for families and loved ones. We appreciate your willingness to complete and sign death certificates.

Sincerely,



JoAnn Jackson, MBA  
Registration Manager  
State of Oregon  
Center for Health Statistics  
Office of Disease Prevention and Epidemiology

Reviewed by  
M. L. Smith, MD

