

Submitter: Daniel Brewer
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3127

As a funeral professional and a funeral home serving the greater Portland area and the broader northwest community, I am writing to express my full support for HB3127, a bill that mandates physicians sign death certificates electronically. This legislation is critical to improving the efficiency, accuracy, and timeliness of processing death certificates in Oregon.

When a certifying physician is not registered with the Oregon Vital Events Registration System (OVERS), we are required to create a hybrid, drop-to-paper death certificate accompanied by a "Dear Doctor" letter with instructions for completion. This paper-based process requires physically delivering the certificate to the physician's office, and even under optimal circumstances, it is rarely completed within ten business days. Often, certificates are returned incomplete or incorrect, necessitating additional trips and further delays.

On average, the turnaround time to provide certified copies of death certificates to families and next of kin is between 14 to 21 days. This extended timeframe frequently causes significant financial hardship for the grieving families we serve. Bank accounts and other financial instruments are typically frozen until a certified death certificate is presented. Additionally, life insurance claims often require a certified death certificate to process benefits, further delaying access to critical funds and creating unnecessary stress during an already challenging time.

The electronic death certificate process within OVERS ensures that records are validated and corrected when signed by the certifying official. Once signed, the record progresses seamlessly to the respective county for timely processing, minimizing delays and ensuring families receive the documentation they need more quickly.

By approving HB3127, Oregon will align its death certification process with those of Washington and California, both of which require electronic certification. This modernization will enhance the efficiency and accuracy of death certificate processing, reduce the burden on certifying physicians, and most importantly, alleviate unnecessary hardship on the families we serve.

I strongly urge the legislative body to approve HB3127, as it represents a meaningful improvement in the delivery of services and care to families during their time of need.

Sincerely,
Daniel Brewer
Funeral Home Manager
Skyline Memorial Gardens Funeral Home
503-292-6611