

Johannah Miller

****On Behalf Of:****

House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

****Measure/Topic:****

HB3127

The State of Oregon's efforts to encourage medical certifiers to sign death certificates electronically have been significantly inadequate. Funeral homes are repeatedly advised by state staff to encourage medical certifiers to register for electronic filing; however, despite sending numerous brochures and personally reaching out to clinic supervisors, response rates have been disappointingly low. We even contacted Providence Milwaukie Hospital in an attempt to assist in getting local medical certifiers registered, but while some certifiers complied, the State's support in properly enrolling them was insufficient. There were no clear recommendations for assigning administrative roles at clinics, no timely assistance for resetting passwords, and a general lack of resources to facilitate the process. As a result, many certifiers became frustrated and requested a return to paper forms.

It is concerning that we are required to inform medical certifiers—despite their professional qualifications—that they must refrain from using white-out or crossing out information without initialing changes. This situation creates an additional burden when providing families with certified copies of their loved ones' death certificates, which often contain cross-outs or illegible scribbling. Furthermore, families regularly experience delays of up to two weeks or more to receive these documents, a delay that could be reduced significantly if electronic submission were the standard.

The turnaround time remains unacceptably long, especially considering the efforts made by funeral home staff, who often visit clinics and health departments multiple times to expedite

the process. On top of this, clinics sometimes lose documents or experience delays in mailing, requiring us to request a reset through the OVERS Help Desk, thereby restarting the entire process.

The implementation of mandatory electronic filing for medical certifiers would likely eliminate most of these challenges and vastly improve the efficiency and professionalism of the death certificate process.