

Wisconsin Vital Records



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Agenda

- Definitions/acronyms
- Vital Records 101
- Core functions of Vital Records
- Deeper dive into death records and cause of death reporting
- Q&A

Definitions/Acronyms

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| NCHS | National Center of Health Statistics |
| VSCP | Vital Statistics Cooperative Program |
| NAPHSIS | National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems |
| SVRO | State Vital Records Office |
| SVRIS | Statewide Vital Records Information System |
| C/ME | Coroner/Medical Examiner |
| Medical Certifier | Physician, coroner, or medical examiner that completes the cause of death statement on a death record |
| COD/MOD | Cause of Death / Manner of Death |

Vital Records 101

- What is a vital record?
 - Birth, death, marriage, divorce, declaration of domestic partnership, termination of domestic partnership
 - Worksheets approved by State Registrar that are related to these records
 - Data related to these records or worksheets
- Vital records typically contain statistical, demographic, and medical data

Vital Records 101 (cont.)

- Vital Records are a state function and are not federally mandated
- 57 jurisdictions
 - 50 states, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, Guam, District of Columbia, New York City, and Northern Marianas Islands
- NAPHSIS provides model law to promote uniformity in vital records across jurisdictions

Vital Records 101 (cont.)

- Governed primarily by Wis. Stat. Chapter 69
 - Other statutes and Admin codes also affect vital records
 - ◆ Wis. Stat. Chapter 765, Chapter 979, DHS 142 and DHS 135
- In Wisconsin, vital records were not required to be registered with the state until October 1907
- It is estimated that state records do not exist for more than 50% of the births, deaths, and marriages that occurred prior to that time



Vital Records 101 (cont.)

- National Center of Health Statistics
 - Division of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - Formed in 1960 with the merging of the National Office of Vital Statistics and the National Health Survey
 - Provides detailed specifications for collecting and reporting the items on birth, death, and fetal death certificates along with training on improving cause of death statements
 - ◆ [NVSS - Writing Cause-of-Death Statements \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/nvss/writing-cause-of-death-statements)
 - Provides ICD-10 medical coding of cause of death statements back to jurisdictions

Core Functions

- SVRO is responsible for filing, preserving, protecting, amending, and issuing certified and uncertified copies of vital records for events that occur in Wisconsin
- Administer and enforce Wis. Stat. Chapter 69
- Direct the system of vital records
 - Including providing direction to the local registrars
- Act as record custodian for all records in the office of vital records

Core Functions (cont.)

- Prescribe, furnish, and distribute forms related to vital records
- Prepare and publish an annual report of vital statistics
 - [Vital Statistics | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
 - [WISH \(Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health\) Query System | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- Provide local health departments with vital statistics for planning and program activities

Deeper Dive into Death Records

- Wis. Stat. 69.18 controls
 - Who may move a corpse for final disposition
 - When a death record is to be filed with SVRO and who is responsible for filing the record
 - Who may act as the medical certifier
 - And more...
- While SVRO provides direction on the manner in which records are filed, oversight concerning the determination of cause and manner of death is limited

Deeper Dive into Death Records (cont.)

- Flow of a death record in SVRIS
 - Funeral director (or coroner/medical examiner) initiates death record in SVRIS by entering decedent's personal information
 - Funeral director reviews information with family
 - Funeral director makes any necessary changes to the death record
 - Funeral director selects the medical certifier and saves the record
 - Death record is routed to the medical certifier

Deeper Dive into Death Records (cont.)

- Flow of a death record in SVRIS (cont.)
 - Medical certifier reviews the death record; enters cause-of-death information; and electronically signs and certifies the death record
 - Death record is routed to the funeral director.
 - Funeral director reviews death record and electronically signs
 - Death record is routed to the local vital records office (LVRO) Work Queue
 - LVRO accepts the death record
 - State Vital Records Office (SVRO) registers the death record

Deeper Dive into Death Records (cont.)

- Cause of Death statements
 - The best medical opinion of the medical certifier
 - Capture the sequence of events leading to death, plus the time interval between the onset of each condition and death
 - Consist of two parts
 - ◆ Part I – chain of events leading directly to death, with the immediate cause listed first and the underlying cause listed last
 - ◆ Part II – for reporting all significant conditions that contributed but did not result in the underlying cause given in Part I

Deeper Dive into Death Records (cont.)

- Manner of Death
 - Can be listed as Natural, Accident, Suicide, Homicide, Undetermined, or Pending
 - ◆ Pending is only used when an investigation is still underway and there is reason to believe the investigation will clarify the manner
 - The National Association of Medical Examiners has established a guide on how manner may be determined
 - ◆ In some cases, the manner of death preferred by C/ME communities may conflict with disease classification

Deeper Dive into Death Records (cont.)

- SVRO reviews COD statements for legal acceptability per Wis. Stat. 69 and for adherence to NCHS medical coding standards
- Jurisdiction/reportable deaths per Wis. Stat. 979.01
 - Unexplained, unusual, or suspicious circumstances
 - Homicides, suicides, deaths following an abortion
 - Deaths due to poisoning
 - Deaths following accidents, whether the injury is or is not the primary COD
 - When a physician refuses to sign or cannot be obtained

Deeper Dive into Death Records (cont.)

- How is SVRO involved in death investigations?
 - Short answer – we aren't
 - ◆ Medicolegal death investigation is a function of coroner/medical examiner offices
 - ◆ Oversight of investigation standards/policies related to is at the county level
 - ◆ SVRO's only oversight is in relation to the filing of the death record and legal acceptability of the death record as outlined in Wis. Stat. 69.18

Questions?



Thank you!