

THE *vital* CONNECTION

Connecting Vital Records Partners Across Georgia

February/March 2016

MARRIAGE

VITAL RECORDS

THANK YOU FROM *Director Moore!*



On February 9th, 10th, and 11th, the State Office held the first quarter Probate Judge Registrar Training in Gwinnett, Bibb, and Cook counties. Thank you to those who joined us. Your participation and feedback was greatly appreciated. And we extend a very special thank you to all of the Executive Probate Council Members who attended and those who assisted with the coordination of the meetings. The meeting was videotaped and will be available on our website soon.

CONSTITUENTS' CORNER: Same-Sex Marriages

The legalization of same-sex marriages does not impact Vital Records' processes. Our processes are the same for opposite and same sex couples. For example, a same sex couple who married in 2014 and had a baby in 2016 would need to have proof of marriage to have their spouse's name added to the birth certificate, just as an opposite sex couple would need. The Paternity Acknowledgment/Legitimation (PA) also remains the same. That is, the purpose of the PA is to establish the biological relationship between the child and the father. Therefore, the PA does not apply to same sex couples.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

You asked and we're answering, straight from the director's desk!

Q. How does a local county registrar know when a correction or an amendment is completed?

A. Currently, the county registrar is notified of a completed correction or amendment through an email or a telephone call from the State Office.

Q. How do local county registrars get forms for amendments, PAs, corrections, and disposition permits?

A. Currently the forms are available at the State Office and will be available on DPH Vital Records website late spring. Please contact robin.whitehead@dph.ga.gov with requests.

Q. Do I have to keep copies of disposition permits I issue?

A. Disposition permits are required by law to be kept indefinitely. [31.10.20, 511.1.3.23]

Consider keeping electronic copies rather than hard copies.

As a local registrar, you are required to make disposition permits available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In the future, the disposition permits will be automatically generated and available through the death record in GAVERS.



Welcome

Cheryl Berry-Desbordes
Regional Consultant (East)
Cheryl.berry-desbordes@dph.ga.gov

The State Office is pleased to introduce Cheryl Berry-Desbordes, the new Regional Consultant for Eastern counties of Georgia. Cheryl joined the DPH Vital Records staff in January 2016. During her 25 year Public Health career, she has worked to impact the dimensions of health at the federal, state, and local levels. Having served the State of Georgia for 10 years, she has had many opportunities to play a significant role in health promotion through wellness and disease prevention collaborative efforts. As a Regional Consultant, she will work to improve surveillance by assuring the accuracy of records and data concerning vital events. Cheryl earned a Master of Science in Public Health from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and a Bachelor of Arts in Public Health and Chemistry from the University of Maryland.

SIGNING BIRTH AND DEATH CERTIFICATES

Georgia Department of Public Health Regulation 511-1-3-.33 provides that the state registrar, custodian or his or her designee is allowed to signature certificates. Accordingly, only a registrar or a deputy registrar with a signature on file with the State Office can sign a birth certificate. As part of our security and fraud prevention efforts, we are able to verify the validity of a certificate by the signature. Regarding death certificates, the state registrar's signature is on the back to the left, and to the right there is a field labeled "Issued by". The Clerk may sign their name in the 'Issuer' field and then emboss their signature with the local county seal.

UPDATING LOCAL COUNTY EMPLOYEES' STATUS

For various reasons (i.e. retirement, resignation, new position, name change/marital status, etc.), the need sometimes arises for you to remove, delete, or change an employee's status. When it does, know that all changes or updates regarding your staff must be submitted through the GAVERS landing page (<https://gavers.dph.ga.gov/welcome.htm>) for immediate follow up and resolution. This request must be authorized by a funeral director, probate judge, or county registrar. It is important that GAVERS accounts are disabled as soon as an employee's role or status changes.

GAVERS TECHNICAL TIPS:

NOTIFICATIONS!

The State Office of Vital Records often gets calls inquiring about the status of a record. It can be a little bit confusing when it comes to tracking your record. The GAVERS application will trigger notifications at various points during the creation of a record. The notifications are emailed to the e-mail address associated with a funeral director or medical certifier as recorded by the GAVERS application.

The first notification occurs when a funeral home designates a record to a medical certifier. This notification will alert medical certifiers that a record has been assigned to them and can be accepted or rejected at this point. The second notification occurs when the medical certifier certifies the record. This notification is e-mailed to the funeral director and is intended as a signal for funeral directors to verify the record. Once the record is verified, the local county becomes the owner of the record. The third and final notification will also go out to the e-mail address associated with the funeral director of the origination funeral home. The third notification is triggered when the record is registered/released by the local county.

Again, it is important to note that notifications will only go out to the e-mail address of the funeral director and the medical certifier as recorded by the GAVERS application. If you are a funeral director or a medical certifier and you do not receive the GAVERS notification mentioned in this article, please enter a support ticket online at <https://gavers.dph.ga.gov/welcome.htm> and click on the Report GAVERS Issue(s) link.

KEEPING COPIES OF PAPER CUSTODIAL RECORDS

Whenever a death record is entered into the system, the electronic copy serves as your paper custodial copy. Meaning, you don't need to print it and put a custodial copy in your files because you have the official record at your fingertips through GAVERS. Additionally, there is reporting capability in GAVERS that allows you to track the registered records for your county. You can choose to record in your docket book, death index, and file in your vault. But, there are other technologies and reporting capabilities available to you through GAVERS that will serve the same purpose for you. In terms of the hard copy of the "long form" or "drop to paper", the following two options are suggested: 1) scan and store the original electronically, or 2) continue to store the hard copy in your files.

For more information, visit: dph.georgia.gov/VitalRecords

GAVERS TESTIMONIAL

During a recent three month period (11/15-01/16), 44% of Chatham County's death records were registered electronically via Georgia's Vital Events Registration System (GAVERS). This is in large part a result of Hospice electronic GAVERS participation. Chief Medical Officer at Hospice Savannah, Dr. Kelly Erola, states, "GAVERS is easy to use, efficient and allows for a faster turn-around for death certificates and greater accuracy and legibility." Please encourage your local medical certifiers to utilize Georgia's Vital Events Registration System.



Birth Record Ratings: THE TOP FACILITIES

Rank		Avg. Days to Register a Birth
------	--	-------------------------------

50 or Fewer Births

1. Mayo Clinic Health Systems In Waycross	1.4
2. Wayne Memorial Hospital	1.7
3. Irwin County Hospital	2.1
4. Liberty Regional Medical Center	1.8
5. Memorial Hospital and Manor	2.9



51 to 200 Births

1. West Georgia Health System	3.0
2. Tift Regional Medical Center	2.2
3. Meadows Regional Medical Center	3.8
4. Colquitt Regional Medical Center	2.8
5. Southeast Georgia Health System Glynn	3.4



201 or More Births

1. Memorial Health University Medical Center	2.6
2. Candler Hospital	2.0
3. Phoebe Putney Memorial	3.6
4. Grady Health System	1.9
5. Wellstar Kennestone Hospital	3.0

Congratulations to those medical facilities whose February ratings for timeliness and completeness have placed them in the top rankings in the state of Georgia. The scores were calculated using the new, stricter standards from NCHS.

CYCLE TIME TO REGISTER A DEATH

The State Office of Vital Records has begun tracking cycle times of death registration by county and days. Please ask your regional consultant for your county's results.

- #1 Towns, 8.7
- #2 Ware, 9.1
- #3 Rabun, 9.5
- #4 Union, 9.8
- #5 Bacon, 10.0
- #6 Wayne, 10.2
- #7 Screven, 10.6
- #8 Bulloch, 10.7
- #9 Gilmer, 10.8
- #10 Berrien, 10.8

CONTACT INFORMATION

Regional Training & Support Manager
Joseph Little - (404) 486-6344

Regional Consultant (East)
Cheryl Berry-Desbordes - (404) 679-4742

Regional Consultant (South)
Michael Coombs - (404) 901-1615

Regional Consultant (West)
Mannett Foster - (404) 901-1634

Regional Consultant (North)
Donna Thomas - (404) 414-9216

Regional Coordinator
Justin Davis - (404) 679-4775

State Office of Vital Records
Contact Center - (404) 679-4702

System Support Manager
Robby Braumuller - (404) 679-4744

Hardware Support Coordinator
Michael Valle - (404) 679-4740

Technical Support Representative
Petra Hood - (404) 679-4738

Technical Support Representative
Shawnketrius Tukes - (404) 679-4728

