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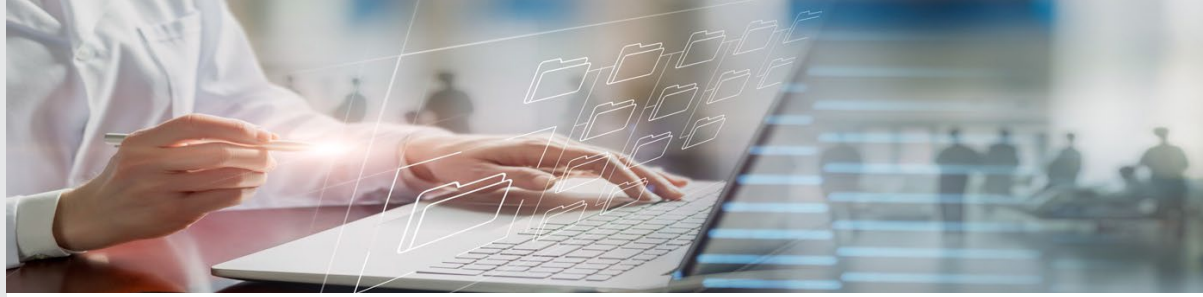
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## White Paper

### Electronic Death Registry in Medicolegal Death Investigation

#### Overview

The electronic death registration system (EDRS) allows death certificates in the United States (U.S.) to be completed electronically, which benefits among others, medicolegal death investigators<sup>a</sup>, hospitals, funeral directors, insurance companies, vital statistics, criminal justice, researchers, and family/estate planning. Medicolegal death investigation offices<sup>b</sup> use electronic case management systems to store data collected for death certification. Connecting case management systems with EDRS allows for efficient, automated, and immediate transfer of information; reduces errors; and eliminates repeated data entry. Further benefits are gained by using the Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR<sup>®</sup>, pronounced “fire”) standard to make connections.

#### Advantages/Benefits

EDRS benefits all stakeholders involved in death certification:

- Enables users to complete the death registration process faster, with easier corrections, and with fewer errors.
- Provides web-based, secure data access at any time and across multiple platforms.
- Incorporates error-checking applications to improve data quality and identify deaths that were not initially reported.
- Enables electronic processing of death certificate amendments.
- Allows immediate transfer of information to vital records.
- Allows timely delivery of death certificate information to next of kin, insurance companies, the Social Security Administration, researchers, and other qualified entities.
- Promotes interoperability when utilizing FHIR<sup>®</sup> data transfer, including improved data quality; customizable systems; retrievable data; simpler data extraction; interoperability; and flexible and easier adoption of future infrastructure enhancements.

<sup>a</sup> Medicolegal death investigators include scene investigators, medical examiners, and coroners.

<sup>b</sup> Medicolegal death investigation offices include medical examiner, coroner, and justice of the peace offices.



## Recommendations

Priority recommendations for medicolegal death investigation officials, health care organizations, and governmental agencies (local, state, federal) to complete U.S. death certifications consistently and efficiently are as follows:

- Incentivize all U.S. medicolegal death investigation offices to use EDRS.
- Ensure the EDRS is interoperable with case management systems to allow two-way data sharing and case creation for maximum efficiency.
- Establish or adopt a common programming language for commercially available systems (e.g., HL7's FHIR® standards).
- Ensure EDRS help desks align with the round-the-clock nature of medicolegal death investigation by providing 24/7 phone and email support.
- Make EDRS instructions and other user materials readily available in common language to ensure understanding by certifiers with varying levels of technological skills and knowledge.
- Provide reliable and consistent dissemination of new information and updates to certifiers, using common and readily understood language.

## Additional Resources

1. Westat. (2016, December). *Electronic death reporting system online reference manual: A resource guide for jurisdictions*. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/edrs-online-reference-manual.pdf>
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5. Ropero-Miller, J., Bynum, N., Keyes, K., Fornaro, E., & Ascolese, M. (2022). *Data exchange practices of medicolegal death investigation*. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International. <https://forensiccoe.org/report-2022-mdi-data-exchange/>
6. Vernon, E., Sorrell, C., Shute, R., & Ropero-Miller, J. D. (2022). A landscape study of electronic case management systems (CMS) for medical examiners and coroners. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International. <https://forensiccoe.org/electronic-case-management-system-mdi/>
7. Raven. (2023). *Raven documentation*. <https://ravendocs.readthedocs.io/en/latest/>

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