

Responsibilities of Health Care Providers When Certifying Death Records

According to Arizona HB 2370 (A.R.S. §§ 11-593, 11-594, 36-301, and 36-325)

Defines **medical certification of death** as the opinion of the health care provider who signs the certificate of probable or presumed cause of death that complies with rules adopted by the State Registrar of Vital Records and that is based on any of the following that are reasonably available:

- a) personal examination;
 - b) medical history;
 - c) medical records; and
 - d) other reasonable forms of evidence.
- Specifies that if a person under the current care of a health care provider for an acute or chronic medical condition dies of that condition, or of associated complications, the provider or designee shall complete and sign the medical certification of death on a death certificate within 72 hours.
 - Requires a hospital, nursing care institution or facility to designate a health care provider to complete and sign the medical certification of death within 72 hours if the person dies of natural causes.
 - Exempts a health care provider who completes and signs a medical certification of death in good faith pursuant to statute from civil liability or professional disciplinary action.
 - Requires the medical examiner to complete and sign the medical certification of death within 72 business hours after the examination, **if current care has not been provided by a health care provider ("Current Care" means that a health care provider has examined, treated (includes prescribing medication) or provided care for a person for a chronic or acute condition within 18 months preceding that person's death. Current care does not include services provided in connection with a single event of emergency or urgent care).** Eliminates the requirement for the examiner to sign when the nurse practitioner and attending physician are not available.
 - Defines **health care provider** as a licensed doctor, nurse midwife, nurse practitioner, physician assistant or health care provider qualified by another state or jurisdiction of the United States and who works in a federal health care facility. (Private health care provider should be licensed in AZ with the exception of those in VA or federal health care facility)

Cause of Death

In order to sign a death certificate, you will need to register for an account. Effective October 2nd 2017, The Database Application for Vital Events (D.A.V.E.) System was implemented for hospitals, funeral home staff, and physicians to process death certificates. For assistance or information about D.A.V.E., please call (602) 364-2230 or email BVRsupport@azdhs.gov.

Patients often have multiple conditions contributing to death. The cause of death information should be your BEST MEDICAL OPINION at the time of signing. A condition can be listed as "probable" even if it has not been definitively diagnosed.

