

DEATH REGISTRATION AND NOTIFICATION PROCESSES: QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

February 25, 2016

Presentation to the Public Sector Service Delivery Council

Objectives

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- To provide an update to the Public Service Delivery Council on work underway on the emerging priority: **Death Notification**
- To present the results of a questionnaire on Death Registration and Notifications Processes in each jurisdiction
 - The questionnaire is an information gathering tool to better understand the death registration and notification process in each jurisdiction
 - Results will help identify barriers/challenges and develop best practices in death notification with a view to improving the service experience for citizens and program integrity, while leveraging existing mechanisms and agreements

Death Registration Process: Questionnaire Results

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Province or Territory	Death registration average (days)	Death registration process	Plans to go electronic?		Challenge(s) to improving timelines					
			Yes	No	Authorities	Legislation	Systems	Resources	Costs	Other
British Columbia	5 to 6	Electronic <i>*paper-based optional</i>	implemented							
Alberta	3.6	Combination	✓			✓	✓		✓	
Manitoba	18	Paper-based	✓					✓	✓	
Ontario	42	Paper-based	✓			✓		✓		✓
Quebec	2 to 11	Combination	implemented							✓
New Brunswick	60	Paper-based	✓ (2017-18)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Nova Scotia	41	Combination	in progress			✓				✓
Newfoundland and Labrador	30	Combination	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Yukon	3	Paper-based		✓	✓					
Northwest Territories	21	Combination	✓							✓

Stakeholders: All surveyed Provinces and Territories have identified medical informants (e.g., doctors and nurse practitioners) and Funeral Directors as stakeholders involved in their respective death registration processes; whereas, both Ontario and Yukon also include municipalities in their processes.

Death Notification Process: Questionnaire Results

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Province or Territory	Death notification process	Challenge(s) to improving timelines						Plans to address challenges?
		Authorities	Legislations	Systems	Resources	Costs	Other	
British Columbia	Combination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yes
Alberta	Electronic		✓		✓	✓		No
Manitoba	Electronic		✓		✓	✓		Yes
Ontario	Electronic	✓		✓			✓	Yes
Quebec	Electronic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New Brunswick	Combination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Yes
Nova Scotia	Combination			✓	✓		✓	No
Newfoundland and Labrador	Combination	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Yes
Yukon	Paper-based		✓					Yes
Northwest Territories	Paper-based	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yes

Notification to Departments and Agencies: All surveyed Provinces and Territories currently share notification of death information with other departments, agencies and stakeholders. Excluding Alberta and Yukon, surveyed Provinces also plan to expand the sharing of death notification practices, as appropriate (e.g., British Columbia will share death notification information for a nominal fee upon request, while also taking into account appropriate privacy and usage review).

Top Common Barriers *

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Registration

Legislation (4)	Jurisdictions
To proceed with improvements some jurisdictions will need to change their legislation.	AB, ON, NB, NS
Resources (4)	Jurisdictions
Lack of resources to modernize processes.	MB, ON, NB, NS
Costs (4)	Jurisdictions
Significant upfront costs to move to an electronic registration process.	AB, MB, NB, NL

Notification

Resources (7)	Jurisdictions
Resources directly linked to priorities, and organizational priorities may not be aligned.	BC, AB, MB, NB, NS, NL, NWT
Systems (6)	Jurisdictions
Multiple processes and underlying technologies currently in place are not sustainable.	BC, ON, NB, NS, NL, NWT
Cost (6)	Jurisdictions
Funding is a concern as jurisdictions have other competing priorities.	BC, AB, MB, NB, NL, NWT
Legislation (6)	Jurisdictions
To proceed with improvements some jurisdictions will need to change their legislation.	BC, AB, MB, NB, YT, NWT

* See Annex for more details.

Best Practices: What we've heard

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British Columbia

- Empowered to collect medical certificates of death and enter into the vital statistics system
- Funeral directors empowered to issue death certificate and burial permit
- All VSAs obtain death data notifications via BC secure file transfer protocol server

Alberta

- Empowered to collect medical certificates of death and enter into the VSA system
- Funeral Directors enter death information directly into the VSA registration data base
- Five day correction of data window to ensure data quality
- Electronic sharing of death data with BC via NRS

Ontario

- High data quality and data integrity achieved through separation of duties between medical practitioners and funeral directors who feed death data to municipalities, who also verify accuracy before sharing with VSA

Quebec

- Internet portal for funeral directors allows for death registration and death certificate request at same time.
- Simplified death registration form allows other provincial Departments to begin death registration process (e.g., Driver's Licence Bureau can collect death event data for VSA)

New Brunswick

- Electronic sharing of death data with NL via NRS
- Discussions underway with ON, QC, NS and PEI to do same

Nova Scotia

- While submitting death registration information to VSA, Funeral Directors have the option to produce and save an electronic burial permit

Newfoundland and Labrador

- Electronic sharing of death data shared with NB via NRS

The road ahead ...

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Next steps for the Death Notification Working Group:

- Continue to identify and showcase best practices in the death registration and notification processes;
- Identify possible solutions to address the top 3-4 common barriers; and,
- Prepare for PSSDC face-to-face meeting in September 2016.

Annex: Details on Barriers to Registration and Notification Processes

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Registration

Authorities

- ❑ Funeral Directors do not have the authority to register deaths which have an impact on timeliness

Legislation

- ❑ Responsibilities for the completion and certification of documents are set out in the *Vital Statistics Act*, which adds an additional layer of stakeholder involvement
- ❑ Under the Act, funeral directors are required to obtain a signed copy of the medical certificate of death from appropriate authority

Systems

- ❑ Changes to business processes may have an impact on existing systems

Resources

- ❑ Lack of resources to modernize business processes

Costs

- ❑ Significant upfront costs to move to an electronic registration process

Other

- ❑ Lack of understanding of health practitioner's obligations under the *Vital Statistics Act*. (i.e., responsibility to submit complete and timely death registration forms)
- ❑ Paper-based registration and the time required to manually code the medical cause of death increases the overall registration time.
- ❑ Lack of clarity around what constitutes an electronic signature

Notification

Authorities

- ❑ Disclosure of data is tightly linked to program-specific requirements, policies, legislations and corporate directives and can not be shared broadly

Legislation

- ❑ Legislation determines to whom the Vital Statistics Agency (VSA) has the authority to disclose data and can not be shared outside of legislative authorities

Systems

- ❑ A rigid reconciliation process is required prior to sharing data using National Routing System (NRS)
- ❑ Multiple processes and underlying technologies currently in place are not sustainable

Resources

- ❑ Delay in HR processes to hire additional staff to work on initiative
- ❑ Resources directly linked to priorities, and organizational priorities may not be aligned
- ❑ Lack of resources to support electronic messaging services

Costs

- ❑ Little flexibility in contracting instruments to fulfill data requests
- ❑ Increase costs to move to electronic registration processes

Other

- ❑ Overall state of readiness by partners