



Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

Dr. Sheila Pinette
Director, Maine CDC

Public Health Update

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Electronic death records

Maine CDC's Data, Research, and Vital Statistics (DRVS) office processes approximately 13,000 death certificates each year. Until recently, Maine's death registration system was paper based. Data providers used typewriters or completed vital records by hand. Death records were hand carried or mailed to doctors' offices for completion of the cause of death section and then mailed or hand carried to municipal offices. This paper-based system no longer met the needs of our customers or public health officials who need the data for public health monitoring and reporting. Using the paper-based system, it can take up to three weeks for DRVS to get a death certificate and make it available for issuance statewide. Cause of death information for analysis may not be available for up to six months after the date of death. DRVS must create a faster, more accurate and more efficient death record filing, registration, certification and statistical system.

Currently there are approximately 115 funeral establishments, 229 municipalities, 66 medical certifiers, and 14 medical examiners that have been trained to use the new electronic system and are utilizing DAVE (Database Application for Vital Events). While this is a good start, the goal is to have all providers enrolled as users of the system by July 2012.

Providers have several opportunities for training to learn the EDRS. There have been multiple training events throughout the state in the past year. Many funeral directors, medical certifiers, medical examiners, and municipal clerks have participated in these trainings. They also have opportunities to refresh their training or complete it for the first time by accessing online training modules, participating in WebEx sessions offered by DRVS, or setting up onsite training events.

The online training link for funeral directors, medical certifiers and municipal clerks is available at <http://dave.trainingserver.net>.

The DRVS website has posted a brochure and additional information about the EDRS which is available at <http://go.usa.gov/RnJ>

EDRS assures that all funeral directors and medical certifiers/medical examiners will be able to go online to complete a record, sign it electronically, and then submit it for registration. When corrections or amendments are completed within the EDRS, they will be notified electronically. In addition, internal system edits will benefit registration staff in both municipal and state offices. For example:

- Blanks will be avoided through prompts to complete mandatory fields before the record can be submitted for registration;
- Contradictory information (such as date of birth, Social Security numbers, etc.) will be caught prior to registration;
- Titles and addresses for medical certifiers and medical examiners will be automatically entered on the record;
- Dates signed will be automatically entered into the record when submitted.

Records submitted electronically will be available for registration and issuance at the municipalities and state office immediately. For fully electronic records, municipalities will not need to forward a paper copy of the record to DRVS. The system will also allow municipalities to print certificates onto certified paper. Since municipalities will have access to the electronic records, there will be no lag time between a correction occurring at DRVS and the corrected record being available at the municipal office for issuance.

Tattoo licensing

Maine CDC's Health Inspection program has seen an increase in tattoo complaints over the past year. Many of these relate to tattoo parties in private homes.

State law prohibits tattooing in a person's home. Tattoos may only be performed in a state-approved tattoo studio. All tattooing must be practiced with a state-issued license. Unlicensed tattooing is a Class E criminal offense, subject to a fine of between \$50 and \$500 or up to six months in prison.

Licensing ensures proper safety training, proper sanitary facilities and equipment, proper disposal of sharps and medical waste, and adherence to state rules for tattooing. All licensed tattoo studios are inspected regularly by Maine CDC's Health Inspection Program.

Receiving a tattoo from an unlicensed tattoo artist increases the risk of skin infection and transmission of diseases such as HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C.

State law also prohibits tattoos being placed on anyone younger than 18.

For more information related to licensing for tattoo practices, visit <http://go.usa.gov/R59>

Oral health maps

Maine CDC's Oral Health Program has posted a series of maps on its website (<http://go.usa.gov/R5f>). These maps are intended to provide a visual picture of Maine's dental professional resources (dentists and dental hygienists), dental clinics, and selected preventive programs, including school-based oral health programs and community water fluoridation. They are based on the most recent data available in the fall of 2011, and will be updated as new data become available. A map that will locate Independent Practice Dental Hygienists and also show the service areas covered by Public Health Dental Hygienists providing school-linked services while using Public Health Supervision status is under development and will be added to this package.

Influenza update

Maine CDC reported sporadic flu activity for the week ending Jan. 7. The first laboratory-confirmed case of seasonal flu was reported on Dec. 23. For more information, see the Health Alert issued Dec. 27: <http://go.usa.gov/No5>

Maine CDC reminds everyone to take everyday preventive measures against the flu:

- Wash your hands frequently
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or shoulder
- Stay home when you feel sick
- Get vaccinated – you can search for flu clinics by county at <http://www.211maine.org/flu-clinics/> or by zipcode at www.flu.gov

Weekly updates on flu activity are available online:

- for Maine: <http://go.usa.gov/NoK>
- for the US: <http://go.usa.gov/ITB>
- for the world: <http://go.usa.gov/ITK>

Vaccination

Maine CDC recommends that Health Care Providers continue vaccinating to protect against influenza this year according to the following guidelines:

Health Care Providers **should** use state-supplied vaccine for patients in the following circumstances:

- The patient is a child ages 6 months through 18 years;
- The patient is pregnant or the partner of a pregnant patient;
- The patient's insurance does not cover vaccinations;
- The patient is uninsured.

Health Care Providers **may** use state-supplied vaccine for other patients only if:

- The Health Care Provider has already vaccinated all eligible patients listed above and has excess state-supplied vaccine; and
- Privately purchased vaccine is not available.

Providers may not charge for state-supplied vaccine. It is reasonable and allowable to charge an administration fee in some circumstances, provided that:

1. MaineCare-eligible children are not charged an out of pocket administration fee;
2. administration fees do not exceed the regional Medicare maximum (\$14.37/vaccine administration); and
3. no one is denied vaccine because of their inability to pay an administration fee.

National Radon Action Month

EPA has designated January as National Radon Action Month. EPA and the Surgeon General recommend that all homes in the US be tested for radon. For local resources to take action against radon:

<http://go.usa.gov/R5G>

For more information about Radon Action Month, visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/radon/nram/public.html>

Federal updates

- The US Department of Health & Human Services has released its first Global Health Strategy: <http://go.usa.gov/R5F>
- US CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention has created Atlas, an interactive platform for accessing HIV, Viral Hepatitis, sexually transmitted disease (STD), and tuberculosis (TB) data: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/atlas/>

Binge drinking

New estimates show that binge drinking is a bigger problem than previously thought. One in six U.S. adults binge drinks about four times a month, and on average the largest number of drinks consumed is eight.

For more information, see this US CDC feature

(<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/VitalSigns/BingeDrinking/>)

and related MMWR (<http://go.usa.gov/R56>)

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For clinical consultation and outbreak management guidance, call Maine CDC's toll-free 24-hour phone line:
1-800-821-5821