



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

JOHN J. DREYZEHNER, MD, MPH
COMMISSIONER

BILL HASLAM
GOVERNOR

**NOTICE OF TRANSITION TO FULLY ELECTRONIC DEATH REGISTRATION SYSTEM
NO PAPER DEATH CERTIFICATES ACCEPTED AFTER JULY 16, 2018**

March 5, 2018

Dear Colleague,

The Tennessee Department of Health Office of Vital Records is pleased to announce the implementation of an electronic death registration system. The Vital Records Information System Management, VRISM, has been in use since September 2017 by all funeral homes and many medical certifiers in Tennessee for electronic registration of death certificates and has allowed families easier and more timely access to these documents, which must be completed before a body may be cremated or buried and are critical in settling estates.

Thanks to all the early adopters, approximately 42 percent of all Tennessee deaths are being electronically certified without any paper processing. Physicians who have already been using the system report it allows them to complete certificates on their own schedules, is user-friendly and better serves their patients' families. In addition, the use of electronic death registration systems improves the quality of mortality data, which is used to direct public health efforts, research and funding. Approximately 46 states have now established electronic death registration systems.

If you are not already using the system, please pay careful attention to the following points:

- **After July 16, 2018 only electronic death certificates will be accepted by the Office of Vital Records pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated 68-3-103 et seq.**
- We anticipate a large influx of new users as this deadline approaches. Registering and beginning to use the system now will provide you, the medical certifier, with the best and most efficient assistance from the Office of Vital Records. Multiple training formats, including on-line webinars and face-to-face interactive sessions, are available and may be scheduled at times most convenient to you.
- **Please register now** using the link below so you can begin using the system well in advance of the July 16th deadline. Registering now also provides you with ample time to receive any needed training or assistance. **Again, paper certificates will not be accepted after July 16, 2018.**
- To register for access to the system, please visit our website at <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/vital-records/vrism.html>. A user agreement form, frequently asked questions and user manuals are available at this site.

For help with using the system, please call 1-855-874-7686 or email health.vrism@tn.gov. To accommodate requests for help, we will staff this line extending beyond normal office hours into the evening on Monday-Friday and on Saturday mornings. To schedule a training session, email Susan.Vacek@tn.gov.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Warren, MD MPH FAAP
Deputy Commissioner for Population Health