

Item 291 of the 2017 Appropriations Act states that:

“The state teaching hospitals shall work with the Department of Health and Division of Vital Records to fully implement use of the Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) for all deaths occurring within any Virginia state teaching hospital's facilities. Full implementation shall occur and be reported, by the Division of Vital Records, to the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees by April 15, 2018, in alignment with the Division of Vital Records plan to promulgate and market the EDRS.”

The Electronic Death Registration System

The Virginia Department of Health’s (VDH) Division of Vital Records is responsible for managing and securing all vital events in Virginia. This includes births, deaths, marriages, divorces, and induced terminations of pregnancy. VDH has made great strides toward automating these processes, utilizing funds from the Virginia Vital Statistics Automation Fund. To that end, the EDRS went live on November 1, 2014.

The Virginia EDRS is a web-based application that enables participants in the death registration process to file death records online with the Division of Vital Records. The EDRS is made available to various user groups free of cost and allows for voluntary adoption of the system by the user groups, including:

- Funeral homes
- Medical Certifiers & Staff (Physicians, Hospitals, Hospice, Nursing Homes, etc.)
- Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME)
- State Anatomical Program
- Local Health Districts

There are currently 4,229 EDRS users. Since the use of the system is not mandatory for all users, functionality is included within the application that allows the user to “drop to paper”. This means that a funeral home can begin the death certification process through the EDRS, however, if the relevant physician is not using the system, the system “drops to paper” and allows the process to continue manually. Prior to the implementation of the EDRS, the death certification process was completely manual. When the EDRS is used end-to-end (i.e., funeral home and physician), the Division of Vital Records has documented cases that demonstrate the timeframe for creating and certifying a death is reduced from 3 days to around 30 minutes.

The EDRS was developed through a collaborative process involving many stakeholders. In August 2016, VDH convened an EDRS Stakeholder Committee with membership from many of these same stakeholder groups including: the Virginia Funeral Directors Association, the Virginia Morticians Association, the Virginia Independent Funeral Homes, the Medical Society of Virginia, the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare

Association, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Decedent Affairs and others. The mission of the Committee is to suggest changes and enhancements to the EDRS and to help prioritize these items. The Committee allows for regular communication and transparency between VDH and the stakeholders as well. This Committee continues to meet and provide continuous feedback, and VDH continues to make periodic enhancements to the EDRS based on such user feedback.

EDRS Teaching Hospital Efforts

The VDH Office of Information Management and the Division of Vital Records have worked collaboratively with the University of Virginia (UVA) Medical Center and the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Medical Center to fully implement the EDRS. All of the medical certifiers at UVA and VCU have been enrolled in, and trained in the use of, the EDRS. The below table shows the number of medical certifiers each medical center has enrolled in the EDRS.

Medical Center	Medical Certifiers
University of Virginia	411
VCU	296

Each medical center is currently using EDRS and both are committed to fully using the EDRS for all deaths occurring in their facility. VDH will continue to work with other teaching hospitals in the Commonwealth of Virginia to bring them on as EDRS users in this same fashion.