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On Behalf Of:
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As a licensed Funeral Service Practitioner in Oregon, I have reached out to a medical certifier to complete the medical portion of the death certificate for a decedent in my care hundreds of times. One thing that always makes my heart sink a little is having to explain to a family that their death certificates will be delayed because a doctor has chosen to only sign on paper despite the existence of a robust electronic system (OVERS), requiring the document to be brought to them and returned by hand. Not only does it often add multiple days to the process and delay the family in receiving the death certificates which allow them to move forward with the very difficult task of closing their loved one's estate when everything goes to plan, there are frequent cases where the document is delivered to the doctor and sits on their desk for days or weeks without attention and is too frequently outright lost, requiring the entire creation and delivery process to start again from the beginning. The number of times I have had to tell a family that we still don't have a death certificate for them 3-4 weeks or even longer after the date of death because the doctor and their team had outright lost or ignored the paper death certificate draft is too high to ever be considered acceptable.

While there are of course cases where a doctor waits an unacceptable amount of time to complete a death certificate electronically, it occurs significantly less frequently. The accuracy and legibility of the OVERS system is far and away superior to paper certificates in nearly all cases. Assigning a medical certifier electronically cuts out the need to waste the natural resources used by having someone drive between the medical facility and vital records offices and back, and it is also impossible to completely lose the document when a physical one does not exist.

For these reasons above, I strongly support a requirement of electronic signing and completion by medical certifiers for reporting deaths and completing death certificates in Oregon.