

Submitter: Vienna Conyngham
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health
Care
Measure, Appointment or
Topic: HB3127

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TO: Oregon House of Representatives

House Committee On Behavioral Health and Healthcare

I started working within Funeral Homes only one year ago, and yet without hesitation I can say waiting for death certificates is one of the hardest parts of the job. Families are given an expected timeline based on statutes and legislation, with the caveat that this timeline may be affected by printing time and acquiring signature from the doctor or medical examiner responsible. The families however are still responsible for using that death certificate to acquire funds, take property out of the deceased's name, stop bills and more. It's an incredibly stressful time in a grieving person's life, not only having to deal with the emotional toll but also having to be responsible for all required steps afterward. The families are working directly with the funeral home, not the doctors, and so when a family doesn't get their death certificate within a reasonable time frame, they call us, and it is then our responsibility to explain that we've done absolutely all we can, and we must now just wait, this of course is not a good answer, but sadly it's the only answer. Getting the death certificate is already a slow burdening process for the family and more often than not were already waiting beyond the allotted 48-hour time period for doctors' signatures, adding onto that the difficulty of having to drop to paper is unjust.

Let me paint you a picture: we've gone through the first part of the death certificate process, confirming with the doctor, as well as collecting and verifying information, now we must print out this death certificate proof and drop it off at the doctor's office. Do they only work at this office? If not, how consistently are they at each one? Will we be waiting a week to get it back if we drop it off at this office or will it be quicker to drop it off at the other office? Now that we have figured out where to bring it, we must make sure the doctor understands what to fill out and sign, but yet that's still not the most time-consuming part of this process because next we need to actually wait for them to sign. Some offices are nice and call us back immediately after it's been signed, most though that require it to be dropped to paper also don't seem to realize the burden on the family that is waiting for these death certificates to arrive. And so, we get stuck in a holding pattern, when this happens, we end up having to call multiple times a week in order to find out when the death certificate is ready. the process goes from simply checking OVERS from a desk, to having to chase down doctors for signatures. Add to this the time spent driving to and from doctors' offices, time which is better spent serving our families in more productive ways.

This process is unpredictable and unfair to the families who have to endure it, and so I implore you to realize the consequences of this system and do the right thing.

Thank you for your time,

Vienna Conyngham
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