

Testimony in support of House Bill 3127, Submitted by an Oregon Licensed Funeral Director/ Embalmer

The electronic death registration filing system has been in place in Oregon for multiple years. It is free for medical professionals to register. No special equipment is required. It is easy to navigate. It provides real-time data updates. Documents are trackable and easily amended. Information is securely transmitted and legible. Records can be accessed anywhere, at any time.

Yet, despite all these features and benefits, many doctors continue to refuse to participate in this efficient, professional, secure, user-friendly system.

The staunch rejection of this highly effective registration tool is baffling and without any discernible merit. Conversely, the harm caused by obstructing the adoption of this system is substantial.

More commonplace than not:

- physical paperwork is “lost” at medical facilities- creating unnecessary delays and requirements for redelivery
- doctors state they are only available to sign physically one day a week (and if that day falls on a holiday, it may be 2 weeks before they will potentially put pen to paper)
- time and fuel are wasted driving across town (and back) to drop paperwork off- and then across town (and back) again to pick it up
- precious productive parts of the business day are lost as staff travel, wait in medical office lines, and are needlessly pulled away from funeral home operations
- private data is put at risk while being physically transported from location to location (or altogether disappearing via USPS mail)
- doctor offices are being called three, four, five, or more times to ask about the status of signing. On average, requiring about a week before a signature is secured
- doctors frequently fail to complete all required fields, with errors only discovered once received back by the funeral home, necessitating starting over the entire process from the start
- amendments to paper filings are time-consuming and can be complicated

But the greatest harm is felt by families in grief. It is a disservice to deny families a smooth, efficient process, if one is available. As funeral professionals, we see and feel the pain and anguish while families desperately await certificates to pay for expenses, to access accounts and property of their loved ones, to have answers about what caused a death, and to progress forward with a to-do list that can be a positive distraction at a time when idle time is excruciating. One of the most frequently asked questions by families is, “when will I get the death certificates?” How incredible it would be to guarantee to every family that any and every doctor will be able and expected to sign immediately.

To resist a system that has been proven safe, secure, fast, accurate, and accessible all the while knowing the direct, negative effects is indefensible and can promptly be resolved by passing House Bill HB3127.

Thank you for your consideration.