

## STATE REGISTRAR NOTICE

<b>Subject:</b> Completing the Report of Death for Drug Toxicity Deaths	<b>Type:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regular <input type="checkbox"/> Transitory	<b>Number:</b>  <b>2019-14</b>
<b>Date Issued:</b> November 15, 2019  <b>Date Effective:</b> November 15, 2019	<b>Audience:</b>  All Death Stakeholders	<b>By Direction of:</b>  Audrey Marrocco State Registrar

As stakeholders in reporting death events in Pennsylvania, you perform a critical role in documenting and providing public health data as part of the Commonwealth's system of vital statistics. The data from reports of death are used by county health departments, about a dozen state agencies and over 28 federal agencies in its decision-making processes and in understanding and assessing public health.

Recent analysis at the national level indicates that the age adjusted death rate due to drug toxicity deaths has increased by over 10%. As such, drug toxicity deaths continue to be a public health crisis. Public health intervention depends on timely, high-quality, and complete data to determine where and how to intervene in this crisis.

To improve the accuracy and completeness of drug toxicity death reporting, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued "[A Reference Guide for Completing the Death Certificate for Drug Toxicity Deaths](#)". This reference guide was developed in partnership with the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME), International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners (IAC&ME), Association of State and Territorial Health Officers (ASTHO), and several other organizations.

This document has been adopted by the PA Department of Health as the guide to be used in Pennsylvania when reporting a death due to drug toxicity. All coroner and medical examiner offices should make their staff aware and familiar with these standards and take any necessary steps to align their death reporting as described in the guide.

For an instructional video on the reporting of drug toxicity deaths, ASTHO and the Indiana State Department of Health have developed a training for coroners which can be viewed at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uH\\_oW0vicn8&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uH_oW0vicn8&feature=youtu.be). We encourage all medical certifiers to view this video as it provides a great overview of how to complete the report of death regardless of the cause of death.

### Contact Information:

#### PA Death Registry

- By Phone: Vital Events Stakeholder Hotline 800-323-9613
- By Email: [ra-DHDeathSupport@pa.gov](mailto:ra-DHDeathSupport@pa.gov)