



Michael Day, Communications Coordinator 971-673-1196  
Ember Talent, Logistics Coordinator 971-673-1195

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## Welcome to OVERS!



**OVERS will  
make vital  
records...**

**Faster...**

**More accurate...**

**More secure.**

Welcome to the first edition of *OVERS News*, a new monthly newsletter from the Center for Health Statistics (CHS). OVERS, the Oregon Vital Events Registration System, is an online system that will modernize and streamline the vital records registration process—from the initial creation and registration of a vital record to making certified copies. OVERS will offer faster services and improved data quality, while meeting national standards and the requirements of the 2004 Intelligence Reform Act.

With EDRS, funeral homes and medical professionals will be able to start a record, complete their portion of the death certificate, and sign the record online. The information will then be available immediately to state and county registrars to register, correct, and issue certified copies of death certificates. Funeral directors, medical certifiers and Medical Examiners will also be able to submit corrections electronically.

### EDRS

The Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) is the first OVERS module to be implemented by CHS and its partners. Pilot testing will occur during the first quarter of 2006 with statewide rollout beginning in July 2006 and continuing for the next 12 months. If funding is available, the birth module (which also includes fetal death) will be implemented in 2007, marriage and divorce in 2008, and induced termination of pregnancy in 2009.

Paper records will continue for those who choose not to participate in EDRS. Records received on paper will be entered into EDRS by state vital records staff after they are registered at the county. Oregon will begin using a new death certificate form on January 1<sup>st</sup> for both paper and electronic certificates. See the story on page 5 for further information about the new certificate.



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## EDRS Technology in Brief

OVERS is a Web-based system, generally requiring only routine hardware and software that you likely already have. As rollout occurs, we will inform you of the specific technology requirements and help assess what else you might need in order to use EDRS. As an online system, security is a priority and will include biometric (fingerprint) identification of participants who are responsible for certifying or signing certificates. Fingerprint readers are the only unusual hardware and software requirements for OVERS. The state will provide 500 of these readers to EDRS participants.

Our office will perform initial system and user-acceptance testing in November and December. This testing allows us to identify and correct any issues that might come

up before pilot testing begins.

Three counties—Lane, Tillamook and Washington—were chosen for pilot testing, which will occur during the first quarter of 2006. After training—anticipated in mid January 2006—the county registrar, county medical examiner, and selected funeral directors and physicians will begin using the EDRS system.

After the pilot ends on March 31<sup>st</sup>, the results will be evaluated and any necessary changes made before statewide rollout begins in July 2006. Our pilot participants are very excited about their involvement in EDRS and are looking forward to using the new system.

## The EDRS Vendor

Oregon has contracted with VitalChek as the vendor for the EDRS system. VitalChek has long been a provider of vital record services to states throughout the country. They have a commercial software program, called DAVE (Database Application for Vital Events) which includes modules for birth, death, marriage and divorce. VitalChek will customize the DAVE death module to meet Oregon’s needs.

In 2000, Ohio pioneered an early version of this software for their death

registration process. In the last year, New York City and Alaska have begun using the version that Oregon has bought.

Buying a commercial software product allows Oregon to have an already-tested solution, which will make it easier to implement. This product will also cost less than developing custom software. The program runs on State-owned servers and is securely accessed through the Web.



## Origins and Influences

Oregon's existing vital records systems have significant limitations. Most systems are paper based or use outdated technology, and they no longer meet all of the needs of our partners or customers. Families need accurate and timely death certificates to settle estates of their loved ones and sometimes there are long delays.

The current systems are also unable to fully meet the needs of public health officials who need quick access to data for public health surveillance. As a result, access and analysis of cause of death data can be substantially delayed. Some of the most important information about the health of Oregonians comes from death certificates, such as infant mortality rates, leading causes of death, and life expectancy. Implementing OVERS will allow Oregon to have faster and more accurate public health information.

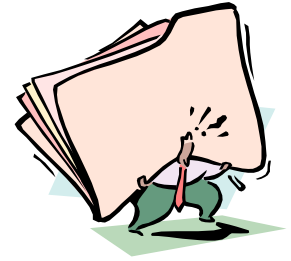
There are two national organizations that have been an important influence on OVERS. The first is the National Association of Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS). NAPHSIS provides national leadership in high quality public health information systems, including vital records registration.

They have produced recommended standards for data collection and storage of vital records and Oregon is an active participant in the group.

The second influential organization is the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), which is the federal government's main health statistics agency. All states are required to submit vital records and health statistics to NCHS at regular intervals, and in specified formats.

NAPHSIS, in partnership with NCHS and the Social Security Administration, has produced electronic death registration standards. These standards were instrumental in the development of Oregon's EDRS and allowed Oregon to minimize the time needed to develop system requirements.

OVERS will allow Oregon to remedy the shortcomings in the current vital records process. It helps meet requirements from the 2004 Intelligence Reform Act. It can also rapidly identify unusual causes of deaths that may require a public health response. Finally, it will improve customer service by enabling families to more quickly obtain certified copies of death certificates.



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*“OVERS will allow Oregon to remedy the shortcomings in the current vital records process.”*

## Get To Know Our Project Team-Part 1



Jennifer Woodward  
*Project Sponsor*

We'd like to introduce you to some of the people responsible for implementing OVERS. This issue focuses on the people that you are likely to see during this process. Next month we will introduce those who work "behind the scenes" to make OVERS a reality.

Jennifer Woodward, the State Registrar, is the **Project Sponsor**. She provides executive leadership to the project and reviews and approves project plans. She also ensures that sufficient budget and resources are provided to meet project goals and objectives. Jennifer has been with CHS since 1993 and the State Registrar since 2000.



Terri Barczak  
*Project Manager*

Terri Barczak is the **Project Manager**, responsible for completing the project on time and within budget. Terri is on contract from R Systems, Inc. She has certification from the Project Management Institute, an MBA, and brings over eight years of government sector project management experience.



Mike Day  
*Communications  
Coordinator*

Karen Hampton is the **Business Lead**. She ensures that the system satisfies user needs by overseeing the business staff working on the project. Many of you already know Karen in her role as the CHS Registration Manager for the past 2 years, and as a CHS Research Analyst before that.

Mike Day is the **Communications Coordinator**. His role is to be the primary communications link between the EDRS project and our customers. This helps ensure that customer needs are represented during our planning. He also helps ensure that customers understand the general function and operation of EDRS. Prior to this, he worked as a CHS Research Analyst.

Susan Landry is the **Training Coordinator** and ensures that training needs are met for both internal staff and external colleagues. She will coordinate and deliver the live training sessions during the rollout phase of the EDRS project. Susan has a technical training background and worked in the private sector healthcare industry for the past six years.

Ember Talent is the **Logistics Coordinator** and assists the EDRS team in meeting project goals. Her job is to understand and meet the technical support and resource needs of internal and external stakeholders. Ember comes from a strong marketing background where her job was to understand and meet the needs of her clients.

## Communication You Can Expect From Us

There will be several methods of communicating OVERS information to interested parties. During EDRS planning and implementation, this newsletter will go to our colleagues who prepare and register death certificates. As additional modules begin planning, the newsletter will be expanded to relevant partners and customers.

Pilot participants will receive a separate newsletter. This will contain more specific information about system requirements, timelines and other facts. A similar newsletter will be provided to other counties and colleagues as they near their rollout dates.

As rollout occurs, you will also receive training information when appropriate. Some of the communications planned include training announcements, registration procedures, meeting agendas, and training materials. You will also be surveyed about OVERS technical requirements.

We have a website dedicated to OVERS. You can find it at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/overs/>. On this site you can find general information about OVERS, project updates, these newsletters, and much more. Please check it out.

Finally, feel free to contact us directly regarding the project. If you are a county registrar, please contact Karen Hampton, the CHS Registration Manager.

If you are a funeral service provider or a medical information provider, or would like general information about OVERS, please contact Mike Day, the Communications Coordinator.

For more specific questions about the project, please contact Terri Barczak, the Project Manager. Our contact information is at the back of every newsletter.



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## New Death Certificate – New Look

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, Oregon will begin using a new death certificate. The certificate will collect additional information required to meet national standards for vital records. This form will be used in both the paper and electronic versions of the death certificate.

The new blank paper forms will be available from the state by December 1<sup>st</sup>. The form will also be available as a fillable PDF file that you can complete and print from your computer. See the upcoming issue of *The Death Certificate and You* for further information.

**Contact Information**

Oregon Vital Event  
Registration System  
CHS, Suite 225  
800 NE Oregon Street  
Portland, OR 97232  
971-673-1201 fax

**Project Manager**

Terri Barczak  
971-673-1142  
terri.j.barczak@  
state.or.us

**Business Lead**

Karen Hampton  
971-673-1160  
karen.r.hampton@  
state.or.us

**Communications****Coordinator**

Michael Day  
971-673-1196  
michael.r.day@state.or.us

**OVERS Website**

[http://www.oregon.gov/  
DHS/ph/overs/](http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/overs/)

## EDRS Kick-Off Meeting a Big Success!

The formal EDRS kick-off meeting was held on September 9<sup>th</sup> with an enthusiastic audience. Several people spoke including Mel Kohn, State Epidemiologist, Jennifer Woodward, State Registrar, and Terri Barczak, EDRS Project Manager. The highlight of the meeting was a

demonstration of the system by the EDRS vendor, VitalChek. Over 60 people attended including many representatives from funeral homes and county registrar offices. You can download the PowerPoint presentation from the kick-off meeting at the OVERS website.