



# 126th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2013

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Legislative Document

No. 252

S.P. 88

In Senate, February 5, 2013

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### **An Act Regarding Registration and Correction of Death Information on Death Certificates**

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Submitted by the Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to Joint Rule 204.  
Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT  
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator CRAVEN of Androscoggin.  
Cosponsored by Representative SIROCKI of Scarborough and  
Representatives: FARNSWORTH of Portland, MALABY of Hancock.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §2842, sub-§§3 and 4**, as amended by PL 2009, c. 601, §25,  
3 are further amended to read:

4 **3. Medical certificate by medical examiner or the Office of the Chief Medical**  
5 **Examiner.** When a death occurs under circumstances that make it a medical examiner  
6 case as defined in section 3025, or when inquiry as to the cause of death is required by  
7 law, the medical examiner or the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner shall complete  
8 the medical certification of the cause of death as specified by department rule and sign  
9 the death certificate. A certification need not be completed before the remains are ready  
10 for release.

11 The medical examiner or the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is responsible for the  
12 identity of the deceased and the time, date, place, cause, manner and circumstances of  
13 death on the death certificate. Entries may be left "pending" if further study is needed; or,  
14 at the specific direction of the Attorney General relative to cases under investigation by  
15 the Attorney General's office, entries must be left "withheld" until such time as the  
16 Attorney General, in the Attorney General's sole discretion, determines that any criminal  
17 investigation and prosecution will not be harmed by public disclosure of such  
18 information. Notwithstanding section 2706, subsection 4, unless directed otherwise by  
19 the Attorney General as specified in this subsection, this information for which the  
20 medical examiner is responsible may be made available to the general public by the  
21 Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

22 **4. Correction of errors on death statistic records filed under chapter 711.**  
23 Certificates of death in medical examiner cases, as defined in section 3025, may be  
24 completed or amended at any time by means described in rule by the department to the  
25 Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. Either the Chief Medical Examiner or the medical  
26 examiner assigned to the case may sign the forms or submit an electronic amendment or  
27 file a certificate using the electronic death registration system in accordance with section  
28 2847. A person authorized by the Chief Medical Examiner may amend a certificate of  
29 death with respect to the time, date, place and circumstances of death. The medical  
30 examiner assigned shall submit the form or electronic amendment to the Office of the  
31 Chief Medical Examiner for filing with the State Registrar of Vital Statistics. These  
32 forms or electronic amendments may be filed at any time after death and need not include  
33 a summary description of the evidence in support of the completion or amendment.

34 **SUMMARY**

35 This bill adds the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner as a certifier of cause of  
36 death on a death certificate to accommodate the electronic death registration system. It  
37 also permits the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to electronically submit  
38 amendments to the death certificate using the electronic death registration system.