

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 60th Legislature (2026)

SENATE BILL 1903

By: Jett

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to vital records; amending 63 O.S. 2021, Section 1-317, as last amended by Section 1, Chapter 251, O.S.L. 2024 (63 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section 1-317), which relates to death certificates; imposing certain duty on hospitals; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 63 O.S. 2021, Section 1-317, as last amended by Section 1, Chapter 251, O.S.L. 2024 (63 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section 1-317), is amended to read as follows:

Section 1-317. A. A death certificate for each death which occurs in this state shall be filed with the State Department of Health within ten (10) calendar days after such death.

B. It shall be the duty of the funeral director to file the death certificate. If the funeral director is not available, the person acting as such who first assumes custody of a dead body in accordance with Section 1158 of Title 21 of the Oklahoma Statutes shall personally sign and file the death certificate. The funeral director shall obtain the personal data from the next of kin or the

1 best qualified person or source available, enter the personal data
2 into the electronic system prescribed by the State Registrar of
3 Vital Statistics, and electronically transmit the partial
4 certificate produced by the electronic system to the physician,
5 physician assistant, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, or medical
6 examiner responsible for completing the medical certification
7 portion of the certificate of death within twenty-four (24) hours
8 after the death.

9 C. 1. The medical certification shall be completed and
10 certified within five (5) calendar days after receipt of the partial
11 certificate by the physician, physician assistant, or Advanced
12 Practice Registered Nurse in charge of the patient's care for the
13 illness or condition which resulted in death, except when inquiry as
14 to the cause of death is required by Section 938 of this title. The
15 physician, physician assistant, or Advanced Practice Registered
16 Nurse shall enter and certify the medical certification portion of
17 certificate data in the electronic system prescribed by the State
18 Registrar of Vital Statistics.

19 2. In the event that the physician, physician assistant, or
20 Advanced Practice Registered Nurse in charge of the patient's care
21 for the illness or condition which resulted in death is not in
22 attendance at the time of death, the medical certification shall be
23 completed and signed within five (5) calendar days after receipt of
24 the partial certificate by the physician, physician assistant, or

1 Advanced Practice Registered Nurse in attendance at the time of
2 death, except:

- 3 a. when the patient is under hospice care at the time of
4 death, the medical certification may be signed by the
5 hospice's medical director, and
- 6 b. when inquiry as to the cause of death is required by
7 Section 938 of this title.

8 Provided, that such certification, if signed by other than the
9 attending physician, physician assistant, or Advanced Practice
10 Registered Nurse, shall note on the face the name of the attending
11 physician, physician assistant, or Advanced Practice Registered
12 Nurse and that the information shown is only as reported.

13 3. It shall be the duty of the hospital that employs or
14 contracts with the physician, physician assistant, or Advanced
15 Practice Registered Nurse in attendance at the time of death as
16 described in paragraph 2 of this subsection to ensure that the
17 medical certification is completed and signed within the time period
18 specified in paragraph 2 of this subsection.

19 D. Within four (4) calendar days after receipt of the medical
20 certification from the physician, physician assistant, or Advanced
21 Practice Registered Nurse as described in subsection C of this
22 section, the funeral director shall conduct a final review of the
23 personal data and the medical certification, electronically sign the
24 death certificate, and submit the death certificate to the State

1 Registrar of Vital Statistics through the electronic system
2 prescribed by the State Registrar of Vital Statistics for official
3 registration.

4 E. A certifier completing cause of death on a certificate of
5 death who knows that a lethal drug, overdose or other means of
6 assisting suicide within the meaning of Sections 3141.2 through
7 3141.4 of this title caused or contributed to the death shall list
8 that means among the chain of events under cause of death or list it
9 in the box that describes how the injury occurred. If such means is
10 in the chain of events under cause of death or in the box that
11 describes how the injury occurred, the certifier shall indicate
12 "suicide" as the manner of death.

13 F. The authority of a physician assistant to carry out the
14 functions described in this section shall be governed by the
15 practice agreement as provided by Section 519.6 of Title 59 of the
16 Oklahoma Statutes.

17 G. A physician, physician assistant, or Advanced Practice
18 Registered Nurse completing and signing a medical certification in
19 accordance with this section shall not be liable in a civil action
20 to recover damages for any acts or omissions relating to the medical
21 certification if the cause of death is determined in good faith
22 using the individual's best clinical judgment consistent with
23 current guidance provided by the applicable licensing board, unless
24 the acts or omissions amount to willful or wanton misconduct. The

1 immunity provided by this subsection shall be in addition to any
2 other immunity from liability to which these individuals may be
3 entitled.

4 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2026.

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