

From: Sarah A. Bradley <bradleys@medboard.nv.gov>

Sent: Friday, August 21, 2020 2:57 PM

To: Spearman, Pat Senator <Pat.Spearman@sen.state.nv.us>

Cc: 'Nevada Funeral and Cemetery Services Board' <nvfuneralboard@fb.nv.gov>; Ruedy, Jennifer <JRuedy@lcb.state.nv.us>; O'Grady, Eileen <ogrady@lcb.state.nv.us>; Richard Whitley <rwhitley@dhhs.nv.gov>

Subject: RE: Delays in Death Reporting

Dear Senator Spearman:

Thank you for following up with us regarding this issue and the discussion of the Sunset Subcommittee on June 30, 2020. The Nevada State Board of Medical Examiners has discussed this issue with Jennifer Kandt, Executive Director of the Nevada Funeral and Cemetery Services Board.

In our conversation, we identified the following areas as possibly helping to ensure that death certificates are timely signed by appropriate healthcare providers as required by NRS and NAC Chapter 440.

First, there is a need for more education about this topic. Physicians and other healthcare providers who do not work in the hospice setting or in geriatric medicine often are not aware of the requirements for signing death certificates. The Nevada State Board of Medical Examiners plans to include articles in its newsletter that is sent to all licensees regarding both registration in Nevada's Electronic Death Registry System and the required timelines under Nevada law. For licensees who may be in attendance on a decedent, registration in Nevada's Electronic Death Registry System prior to that attendance is recommended. The Nevada State Board of Medical Examiners will also add information about this issue to its outreach presentations, provided to physicians, medical students, and other interested parties.

Second, the State Board of Health is authorized to make regulations related to registration of births and deaths. *See* NRS 440.120. We have identified situations where multiple physicians and/or advanced practice registered nurses may be providing care to a patient who later dies. In these situations, it is sometimes unclear who is responsible to sign the death certificate. We suggest that the State Board of Health look at this issue and consider adopting a regulation to clarify this responsibility if/when multiple healthcare providers are involved in a decedent's care.

Third, we identified a lack of clear policies and/or direction on this topic from hospital administration. The Nevada State Board of Medical Examiners will reach out to the Nevada Hospital Association in order to raise awareness of this issue with the hospitals, as well as to remind hospitals that, pursuant to NAC 440.160, for deaths occurring in hospitals, if the physician or advanced practice registered

nurse in attendance is unavailable within 48 hours after death, the certificate must be presented or assigned to the chief medical officer of the institution or associate physician for review and signature. We will also refer complaints regarding failure to timely sign death certificates in the hospital setting to the Bureau of Health Care Quality and Compliance, which licenses medical facilities.

Fourth, we identified a need to improve communication with all state agencies that may intersect regarding this issue. Specifically, that would include the Board of Health, the State Registrar of Vital Statistics, the Bureau of Health Care Quality and Compliance, the Nevada State Board of Nursing, the Nevada State Board of Osteopathic Medicine, the Nevada State Board of Medical Examiners, and the Nevada Funeral and Cemetery Services Board.

Finally, the Nevada State Board of Medical Examiners does review and investigate all complaints received regarding its licensees. We have received and investigated complaints on this issue, and we will continue to do so when these complaints are received. We are also glad to aid consumers and others who reach out to us to proactively assist in getting these certificates signed when needed.

Sincerely,

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