

Sec. 19a-41-10. Death records: Amending cause-of-death information

(a) When existing language on a standard death certificate (VS-4) requires amendment due to a change in the original cause-of-death diagnosis, the practitioner who provided the original medical certification shall submit a letter to the local registrar of the town where the death occurred, indicating the correct cause of death. The letter shall be written on the practitioner's professional stationery and signed and dated by such practitioner. In the absence or inability of the certifying practitioner or with such practitioner's approval, the cause of death may be amended upon receipt of a signed statement, on the hospital's or practitioner's professional stationery, from an associate practitioner approved to certify the cause of death in accordance with section 7-62b(c) of the Connecticut General Statutes, or the chief medical officer of the institution in which the death occurred provided such individual has access to the medical history of the case. The state or local registrar may require documentary evidence to substantiate the requested amendment. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner may also correct the cause-of-death information on a standard death certificate by issuing to the local registrar of the town where the death occurred, a Medical Examiner death certificate (VS-4 ME) listing the correct cause-of-death, along with a letter instructing the registrar to replace the standard death certificate with the Medical Examiner death certificate containing the correct medical diagnosis.

Upon receipt of proper documentation, the local registrar of the town where the death occurred shall amend the original death certificate by drawing a single line through the original cause-of-death information, and typing the correct medical diagnosis, or by entering the corrected data in an electronic death registry system if such system is available to the local registrar. The local registrar shall record the word "Amended" on the face of the original death certificate, along with a description of the item that was amended, and the date of the amendment. If a private practitioner initiates the amendment, the local registrar shall create a new death certificate by typing all the information from the original death certificate onto a blank standard death certificate, or by entering the data into the electronic death registry system, except that the corrected cause-of-death information shall be substituted for the original cause-of-death information. If the amendment is initiated by the medical examiner, the local registrar shall complete the Medical Examiner death certificate received from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner listing the new cause of death, by entering all other information as stated on the original standard death certificate. All dates are to remain the same as on the original death certificate, except that the "Certificate Received for Record" date shall reflect the new receipt date. The new death certificate shall contain the signatures of the practitioner or medical examiner, and the funeral director who signed the original death certificate. If the registrar cannot obtain the signature of the practitioner, medical examiner or funeral director the registrar shall insert the name of the practitioner, medical examiner, or funeral director in the appropriate spaces. The registrar shall not mark the new certificate "Amended."

The local registrar shall send either by mail or electronically, an authenticated copy of the new certificate to the Department and to the local registrar of the decedent's town of residence at the time of death, along with a letter explaining that the certificate being sent is a replacement certificate for the original death certificate already on file. If the death certificate is a paper certificate, the registrar shall send the original death certificate and the

documentation requesting and supporting the change to the Department for placement in a confidential file. Only the commissioner may order the confidential record unsealed. Upon receipt of the amended death certificate, the Department and the local registrar of the town of residence shall replace the original death certificate with the new death certificate. When a certified copy of the death certificate is requested, the registrar or the Department shall issue a certified copy of the new death certificate.

(b) Amendments to cause-of-death information on a Medical Examiner death certificate (VS-4ME) shall be changed only upon the request of the Chief Medical Examiner's Office. To amend a cause of death listed as "Pending," the Chief Medical Examiner's Office shall submit a Correction Form (VS-35) to the local registrar of the town where the death occurred, indicating the actual cause-of-death diagnosis.

Upon receipt of a Correction Form, the local registrar shall enter the new information in the electronic death registry system if available, or in the case of paper death certificates, type or draw a line through the word, "Pending", and insert the cause-of-death information and any additional information into the appropriate boxes as listed on the Correction Form. The registrar shall place the word "Amended" on the face of the original death certificate, along with the item number that was amended, the date of the amendment, and the phrase 'per Medical Examiner.' Not later than ten days after the registrar amends the original death certificate, the local registrar shall send either through mail or electronically, an authenticated copy of the amended death certificate to the Department. If the copy is in paper format, the registrar shall send the authenticated copy separately from the regular monthly batch of vital records sent to the Department. The local registrar shall also send either through mail or electronically, an authenticated copy of the amended death certificate to the decedent's town of residence at the time of death. The Correction Form shall be kept on file at the town of occurrence.

(Adopted effective August 1, 2005)