

# Let's Talk Death Certificates and Cause of Death

# ODH Certificate of Death

- All persons that die in Ohio have a death certificate
- The death certificate is initiated and signed by the physician; generally the decedents physician but sometimes the coroner
- The death certificate is completed by the Registrar in the county where the death occurred

# Parts of the Certificate:

- Decedent – Demographics
- Disposition – Funeral home and arrangements
- Certifier – Physician or Coroner and then registered by the Vital Statistics Registrar
- Cause of Death

# Cause of Death:

CAUSE OF DEATH

28. Part I. Enter the disease, injuries, or complications that caused the death. Do not enter the mode of dying, such as cardiac or respiratory arrest, shock, or heart failure. List only one cause on each line. Type or print in permanent blue or black ink.		Approximate Interval: Onset and Death
Immediate Cause (Final disease or condition resulting in death)	a.	
Sequentially list conditions, if any, leading to immediate cause.	b. Due to (or as Consequence of)	
	c. Due to (or as Consequence of)	
Enter Underlying Cause (Disease or injury that initiated events resulting in a death)	d. Due to (or as Consequence of)	
Part II. Other significant conditions contributing to death but not resulting in the underlying cause given in Part I.		29a. Was An Autopsy Performed?  NO
		29b. Were Autopsy Findings Available Prior To Completion Of Cause of Death? NOT APPLICABLE

# Cause of Death:

- Directions:
  - Part 1: Enter the disease, injuries, or complications that caused the death. Do not enter the mode of dying, such as cardiac or respiratory arrest, shock, heart failure. List only one cause on each line.

# Immediate Cause

- Final disease or condition resulting in death
- This should not be the mode of dying
- For example:
  - Pneumonia (not causative agent)
  - Acute myocardial infarction (heart attack)
  - Liver failure
  - Blunt force trauma (not car accident)

# Sequential:

- List conditions, if any, leading to immediate causes.
  - Due to (or as a consequence of): enter underlying cause
  - Due to (or as a consequence of): Disease or injury that initiated the events leading to death
  - Due to (or as a consequence of): there is a third space for the physician to further elaborate
  - There is also a column to list the approximate interval between onset and death

# Example:

- Immediate Cause of Death
  - Blunt force trauma
  - Immediate
- Due to (or as a consequence of):
  - Vehicular accident
  - 4 hours
- Due to (or as a consequence of):
  - Elevated blood alcohol level
  - unknown



# Example:

- Immediate Cause of Death
  - Bronchopneumonia
  - 1 week
- Due to (or as a consequence of):
  - Coronavirus (virus that caused pneumonia)
  - 11 days
- Due to (or as a consequence of):
  - Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (Disease that may alter the function of the lungs)
  - 15 years
- Due to (or as a consequence of):
  - Tobacco use
  - 40 years

# COVID-19 Death

- A death is counted as COVID-19 death when a death certificate lists COVID-19 disease or SARS-CoV-2 as an immediate cause of death or a significant condition contributing to the death (sequential consequence).

# Death Certificate Data – Delaware County

The Delaware County Vital Statistics Registrar records all deaths in the State of Ohio System

- **Ms. Ronda Hess is the Delaware County Registrar**
- Integrated Perinatal Health Information System/Electronic Death Reporting System
- Ms. Hess, Registrar, does not have copies of death certificates nor an extensive list
- Ms. Hess keeps a quick reference list by year for inquires about the manner of death (natural, accidental, homicide, suicide, etc.)
- Ms. Hess only lists the first cause of death listed by the physician

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