

**2017 Texas Legislative Session:  
Legislation Enacted to Improve  
the Accuracy of Maternal Death Records**

**House Bill 1 (Appropriations)**

**Article II, Department of State Health Services (DSHS)**

**Rider 36. Cause of Death Data Improvement**

Out of funds appropriated, DSHS must study the quality of cause-of-death data on death certificates. DSHS must examine the current process of collecting cause-of-death information and any challenges relating to the quality of the information including, but not limited to, accuracy; completeness; medical certifier roles and perceptions; and structural, procedural, and technological issues. DSHS also must consult national standards regarding collection of cause-of-death information and may convene a panel of experts for advice. Finally, DSHS must submit by Oct. 1, 2018, a report including findings, potential program improvements, and any recommended statutory changes for enhancing the quality of cause-of-death information collection on death certificates to the lieutenant governor, speaker of the House, Legislative Budget Board, and permanent standing committees in the House and the Senate with jurisdiction over health and human services.

**HB 1**

**Article II, DSHS**

**Rider 39. Accuracy of Death Certificate of Pregnant Person or Person Recently Pregnant.**

The legislature directed DSHS to use \$100,000 (out of funds appropriated for the Vital Records Project) to develop and implement an electronic process for determining whether a woman was pregnant at the time of death or was pregnant at any time in the year preceding her death to ensure the accuracy of her death certificate.

**Senate Bill 1599 relating to maternal mortality reporting and investigation information.**

This bill, which took effect Sept. 1, 2017, requires DSHS to post on its website information on the systematic protocol for pregnancy-related death investigations and best practices for reporting pregnancy-related deaths to the medical examiner or justice of the peace of each county, as applicable. Posted information includes guidelines for:

- Determining when a comprehensive toxicology screening should be performed on a person whose death was related to pregnancy,
- Determining when a death should be reported to or investigated by a medical examiner or justice of the peace in the county where the death occurred, and
- Correctly completing the death certificate of a person whose death was related to pregnancy.