



Kirt Edblom, <https://flic.kr/p/ruzqEX>

News from the Center for Health Statistics Concerning the Oregon Birth Certificate

Issue: April 2015

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Birth record submission timeliness: achieving the five-day requirement

Staff in the Center for Health Statistics regularly review birth data to see how timely birth records are being registered. Analysis of the January 2015 data shows 79% of birth facilities failed to submit birth records within five days of the birth as required by law. Remember, Oregon Revised Statute 432.088(1) requires every Oregon birth record to be submitted/signed within five days of the date of birth.

In January 2015, the 67 facilities that submitted birth records differed widely in their timeliness. The graph on page three shows the number of facilities achieving various levels of timeliness.

Two facilities stood out in January by achieving high percentages for the five-day requirement for birth record submission: Providence St. Vincent Medical Center (330 deliveries, 96.1% submitted within five days) and St. Charles Medical Center – Bend (138 deliveries, 99.3% submitted within five days).

We asked the birth clerk managers at these two facilities to share their strategies for success; three themes emerged:

- **Birth clerks are integrated as part of the birth team.** At St. Charles, birth clerks are embedded in the Family Birthing Center. St. Vincent’s birth clerks are expected to have patient relations and communication skills as well as typing skills. They have also trained other team members (health unit coordinators, CNAs and nurses) on the certificate worksheet so they are able to answer questions.

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Birth record submission timeliness (Continued from page 1)

If there are any questions they cannot answer, birth clerks are contacted to come and assist. In addition, two CNA/health unit coordinators are trained as back-up typists.

- **Strong leadership with direct involvement with birth clerk staff.** St. Vincent’s Lead Birth Clerk has established a strong orientation and instruction program and is dedicated to the personal and professional success of each team member. Along with her manager, she holds the team to the highest of standards and attends carefully to the details of the state requirements. The St. Charles’ birth clerk supervisor holds quarterly team meetings to review performance and to make improvements.
- **Accountability and Dedication.** At St. Vincent, the manager and the peer group strive to make each team member feel empowered, professional and proud to achieve the high standards required of them. St. Charles staff are “...dedicated to our patients and to the team. There is an intrinsic motivation to do an excellent job.”

In addition to the items listed above, St. Vincent’s birth clerks provide parents with birth certificate worksheets in the morning, and collect the worksheets from the health unit coordinators twice during the day. Parents who have not turned in the worksheets receive a sign on their door stating the worksheet is due so staff can

remind patients to turn them in before the birth clerk leaves at 3:30pm.

Other ways in which staff at birth facilities in Oregon (and other states) accomplish birth record submission within five days include :

- **Adding the parents’ worksheet to the pre-admission forms (process).** This cuts down on time spent waiting for parents to complete their portion of the birth certificate information after the baby is born.
- **Modernizing the way birth data is collected,** such as utilizing in-room computers or laptops to enter the required information into the OVERS system while in the room with the parents. This streamlines the data collection and entry process.

You can see how your facility is doing each month from the “Birth Facility Performance Report.” This report is emailed to birth clerk managers monthly. These reports outline hospital performance in areas such as the timeliness of birth record submissions (Figure 1).

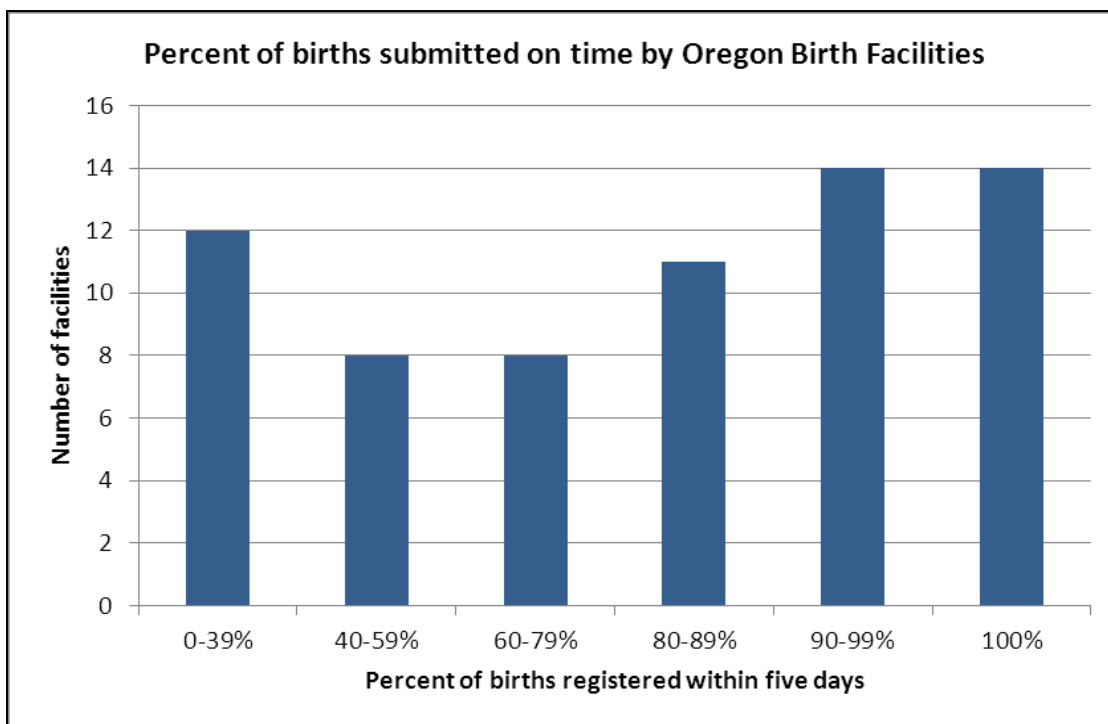
Check out the following links for self-paced trainings and birth facility user guides:

- [How to Register: Birth Records](#) (instructions, forms, and more);
- [Oregon Vital Events Registration System \(OVERS\) Frequently Asked Questions](#);
- [OVERS User Guides](#) (training guides).

For questions, contact JoAnn Jackson, Registration Manager, at 971-673-1160 or by email at JoAnn.Jackson@state.or.us. ❖

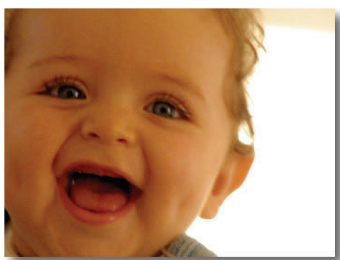
Figure 1: Example of section of the “Birth Facility Performance Report” highlighting timeliness

Counts below are for registered records only		
<u>Births</u>	Number	% of Births
Signed within 5 days of birth	26	15.8 %



Obtaining correct names for records

We need your help avoiding errors in child names on birth records. Parents requesting changes to birth records have told us they were instructed to enter two surnames for their child in a specific sequence—usually the father’s primary last name first, followed by the mother’s primary last name. Please do not tell parents how to enter a child’s name(s). Parents choose their child’s last name without restriction. The mother may give her child her exact maiden or legal last name, or the parents may choose a different option for their own personal reasons.



Fabricio Muñoz de la Maza, <https://flic.kr/p/25ZfeJ>

You can avoid registration errors for

Spanish names—especially Spanish surnames by using the “Spanish Birth Worksheet.” The Spanish worksheet provides clear headings for both the primary last name and the secondary last name—“Primer Apellido” and “Segundo Apellido.” These headings can prevent errors where the first of two surnames is entered as the middle name (Figure 1).

We want parents to have a clear understanding of their naming options. We believe our birth worksheets can help you enter names correctly. If you have any questions regarding using the birth worksheet to get accurate Spanish names for birth records, please contact JoAnn Jackson at joann.jackson@state.or.us, or call her at 971-673-1160. ❖

Figure 1: Spanish birth worksheet, names section

CHILD					(Página 1 de 2)
Nombre legal del niño, como quiere que aparezca en el acta de nacimiento					
Primer nombre	Segundo nombre	Primer Apellido	Segundo Apellido	Sufijo	

New video for paternity rights & responsibilities AOP

Staff at the Oregon Department of Justice, Division of Child Support has created an updated “Rights and Responsibilities” video in English and Spanish that can be used when parents are completing an “Acknowledgment of Paternity” form. A link to the video and a written version of “Rights and Responsibilities” can be found on the following web page:

<https://public.health.oregon.gov/BirthDeathCertificates/ChangeVitalRecords/Pages/InstructionsPaternity.aspx>.

The Division of Child Support plans to make DVD’s of the “Rights and Responsibilities” available in the future. When they become

available, we will send out additional information about obtaining copies. ❖



New - standard birth worksheets available online

The Center for Health Statistics stopped collecting certain items on birth and fetal death certificates in October 2014. You may remember hearing about this in one of our training webinars or reading about it in the November 2014 newsletter article titled, “[Birth and fetal death certificates: now with fewer items!](#)” Both the Parent and Facility worksheets have been updated to

reflect these changes. The new worksheets are available on our [birth registration website](#) in letter (8.5x11) size.

All birth facilities and midwives are expected to use the CHS standardized worksheets unless use of customized birth worksheets has been pre-approved by the State Registrar. Please do not use your own worksheets unless you have received approval. For a reminder about items that must be included in a customized worksheet, see the January 2015 newsletter article titled, “[New year, new worksheets.](#)” ❖

Enumeration at Birth – Frequently asked questions about requesting social security numbers

Staff at the Center for Health Statistics receive numerous questions about the Enumeration at Birth (EAB) process. We

present the list of frequently asked questions below. The list will also be posted to the

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“Register Vital Records” website for future reference.

1. Where did EAB, also known as requesting a social security number on the birth record, come from?

Before the electronic **registration** of birth, parents contacted the Social Security Administration (SSA) to have social security numbers assigned to their child. This was a significant amount of staff time for SSA and an inconvenience for parents.

As electronic birth registration grew (think back to DOS floppy discs mailed to the state), SSA was able to receive electronic files on the births. After piloting with three states in 1987, SSA implemented a nationwide system in 1989. By 1997, SSA had contracted with every state, New York City, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. In 2004, 90% of all SSNs assigned to infants through SSA were through the EAB process.

Assignment of a social security number is needed for taxes, food stamps, medical assistance, housing assistance, etc., from the time the child is born. Later in life, the SSN provides an authorization to work in the United States and, eventually, the account for retirement benefits. Although routine, assignment of the social security number for an infant is an important legal action.

2. Which records (names, deceased, adoption pending) are sent?

Records are sent to SSA if all of the following are true:

- the parent(s) requested a social security number be issued;

- the child is alive at the time the birth record is created; and
- all mandatory fields are present.

SSA requires first and last names, address (street, city, state, zip code) of mother, child’s date of birth, child’s sex, city of birth, state of birth, mother’s first and maiden name, father’s first and last name (“?” used if father not on record). SSA rejects records with Baby, Babyboy, Baby Boy, Babygirl or Infant as first name.

While we would prefer not to send a record where an adoption is expected, the system does not block this type of record. When a record is sent, the mother’s name, the mother’s social security number and the mother’s address (to which the social security card will be sent) are included. In an adoption, that information is for the birth mother, not the person who will become the legal parent.

3. Why are there so many limitations?

There are two reasons for the limitations SSA has for EAB.

1. SSA has not changed their computer systems in decades. This means their current system has many limitations on data content and format. For example, “Other Middle Name” is not sent to SSA because their system has no such field. First and middle names are each limited to 16 characters including spaces. Last names are limited to 21 characters including spaces. Suffixes are limited to four characters.
2. EAB establishes a lifelong identity with SSA. It is important that enough information is received that the person

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Enumeration at birth (Continued from page 5)

can be identified throughout their life. It is also important that duplicate social security numbers not be assigned to a person.

4. Why is the Authorization to Establish SSN at Birth form required?

The Authorization to Establish Social Security Number at Birth is required because submitting the child's name to SSA creates a relationship between the federal government and the child. Parents have the right to control that action. To ease the process of entering the request into OVERS, we have the checkbox on the parent worksheet. The legal authority to request the social security number used to document the request is the Authorization form. The Authorization form is faxed to Vital Records so we can show we sent the record with the consent of the parents.

5. Why are hospitals involved in a contract between the state and SSA?

The hospital staff or the midwife is the person in contact with the parent. You, and only you, have the opportunity to talk to the parent and collect and enter the information in OVERS. This is the process throughout the country and is not unique to Oregon, although details of the process vary from state to state.

6. Does the parent have a choice?

Yes, the parent has the right to authorize or not authorize the issuance of a social security number for their child. A parent cannot require a social security number be issued through the

EAB process for a child who is deceased or unnamed.

If a parent assures you that "Baby Boy" is intended to be the child's life-long name, please tell them the Social Security Administration's system screens out that record. The hospital and Vital Records cannot control this limitation and cannot push through the request. The parent must go to SSA directly to have the number issued.

7. What do you do and when?

For each birth, the birth clerk or midwife must do the following:

- Use the standard worksheet (state or approved facility-specific) which includes both the checkbox for whether to request SSN for the child and the "Authorization to Establish Social Security Number at Birth" form (page four of worksheet).
- If the parent selects "yes," offer the "Message from Social Security" form that acts as a receipt/confirmation of the social security number request.
- Enter the information into OVERS as authorized by the parent.
- Fax the "Authorization to Establish Social Security Number at Birth" to the fax number dedicated to EAB which is 971-673-3122. You can fax forms individually or as a group. Forms should be faxed within one week of the birth.
- Keep the full parent worksheet, including the "Authorization to Establish Social Security Number

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Enumeration at birth (Continued from page 6)

at Birth” no less than one year, then shred no later than two years after the date of birth. Do not keep any part of the parent worksheet in the patient’s medical record.

The birth clerk or midwife should contact the Social Security Administration as needed for additional “Message from Social Security” forms. CHS is not notified by SSA when language is updated on the form. A sample template is available on our web page at <http://1.usa.gov/1Hp4Blb>.

8. What if the parent has questions?

If the parent has questions you cannot answer, please relay those questions to us. We provide *general information* to parents on how to request a SSN and limitations of the EAB process. However, Oregon is a closed record state, so we cannot share information without knowing the identity of the person with whom we are speaking. We cannot provide specific information to a parent (such as, what mailing address do you have listed for the mother) by telephone, letter or email. Specific questions must come from the birth clerk or midwife.

9. When should the parent expect the Social Security card?

The Social Security Administration has Oregon as a three-week state. This means the social security card should arrive within three weeks of the child’s birth.

10. What if the card does not arrive?

Contact our office if the card has not been received. There are several reasons the card might not arrive, such as failing edits at Social Security related to name, or an incorrect mailing address. Social Security cards are sent within the United States and Mexico. If the country was mistakenly entered as “United States” for example, the address would need to be corrected.

Vital Records can resubmit records rejected by SSA, but we cannot submit corrections for accepted records. This is a limitation of the system processing EAB. Most corrections need to occur at the SSA office.

11. What if the card is incorrect when it arrives (wrong name, blank name)?

Sometimes the card is received with incorrect information. If the name is incorrect, and the parents did not change the baby’s name after the record was registered, the parents should contact the hospital or midwife to correct the spelling of the child’s name.

If the name is cut off after a certain number of letters, that is most likely the limitation of the SSA’s electronic system. It cannot be changed at Vital Records. Parents are encouraged to order a certified copy of the birth certificate to confirm the correct information appears on the record.

To correct information on a social security card, the parent will need to contact SSA directly and provide documentation required by them.

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Enumeration at birth (Continued from page 7)

Vital Records cannot process corrections to SSA. We are limited to original records only – once a record is submitted to SSA, any additional send will either be rejected as a duplicate and not processed, or it will be accepted as a new record resulting in a duplicate social security number being issued. Neither of these options meets the parents' goals. You (or the parent) can find the closest SSA office

Fetal death reporting reminder

In past newsletters, we have written about the definition of a fetal death and how a fetal death is reported when it occurs outside of a medical facility. This article is a reminder of how that reporting should occur.

Legal responsibility:

Oregon law states that a fetal death must be reported within five days of the delivery if the weight is 350 grams or higher, or if delivery weight is



unknown, when gestation is 20 weeks or greater. A fetal death is defined as the death of a fetus before the complete extraction from the mother. The death is indicated by the fact that the fetus does not breathe or show any other sign of life, such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or definite movement of the voluntary muscles.

When a fetal death occurs:

- in a medical facility, the facility staff is responsible for creating the “Report

at <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>.

12. What if I have questions?

Please contact Cynthia Roeser, Data Entry Supervisor in the Registration Unit, with any questions on the EAB process (Cynthia.R.Roeser@state.or.us or at 971-673-0478). We also have information available online at <http://bit.ly/ssn-eab>. ❖

of Fetal Death” in OVERS within five days of the event.

- outside of a medical facility and a medical doctor is not in attendance, the Medical Examiner must be called. The medical examiner will complete and file the “Fetal Death Report” within five days of the event.
- at a home and a medical doctor is in attendance, the doctor is required to complete and file the “Report of Fetal Death” within five days of the event.
- at a home and a medical doctor is not in attendance, and the fetus is taken to a hospital immediately, receives medical attention, and/or tests and a final determination of fetal death is made, the hospital staff is asked to complete and file the “Report of Fetal Death” within five days of the event.

If you have any questions about fetal death, please contact JoAnn Jackson, Registration Manager, via email at joann.jackson@state.or.us or by telephone at 971-673-1160. You may also contact Cynthia Roeser, Data-entry Supervisor, via email at cynthia.r.roeser@state.or.us, or by telephone at 971-673-0178. ❖

Health Statistics loses valued staff member

Sheila Vu, a registration specialist in the Center for Health Statistics (CHS) for 15 years, died on January 15, 2015.

Sheila was responsible for registering birth and death certificates and making sure the information was accurate.

Sheila's good nature and cheery "good morning" brightened everyone's day. She was a

respected co-worker who happily shared her expertise and institutional knowledge. She

was also a valued friend who will be terribly missed. In addition to her work family, Sheila leaves behind four children and two grandchildren, as well as her four-legged kids. ❖



Wanted—Newsletter topics

Do you have a question or idea for a future newsletter article? Contact Judy Shioishi, at 971-673-1166 or judy.shioishi@state.or.us. Judy collects ideas for articles and then shares them with the writing team.

Thank you to the contributors of this newsletter:

Melissa Alarcon-Evans, James Burke, Debbie Gott, Joyce Grant-Worley, Karen Hampton, Carolyn Hogg, JoAnn Jackson, Lynda Jackson, Jill Janisse, Krista Markwardt, Craig New, Barbara Price, Cynthia Roeser, Carol Sanders, Judy Shioishi, Patricia Stinson and Jennifer Woodward .

We're just a phone call away

Frequent Contacts

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Birth Corrections <1 year, Amanda Vega 971-673-1169	Delayed Filings Becki Buskirk 971-673-1147
1year +, Johanna Collins 971-673-1137	OVERS Help Desk 971-673-0279

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OVERS Manager Karen Hampton 971-673-1191	Statistics Manager Joyce Grant-Worley 971-673-1156
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General Information: 971-673-1190
Order Vital Records: 1-888-896-4988

Website: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/BirthDeathCertificates>

OVERS website: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/BirthDeathCertificates/RegisterVitalRecords/overs/Pages/index.aspx>

