

***VITAL RECORDS IMPROVEMENT FUND  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE***

*To The New Hampshire Department of State*

***- MINUTES -***

***Wednesday***

***December 9, 2020***

**-MINUTES-**

**Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting**

December 9, 2020

Virtually via Zoom

***COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:***

David Laflamme, Data User, DHHS Appointment  
Denise M. Gonyer, State Registrar  
Brian Burford, State Archivist  
Jennie V. Duval, MD, Medical Examiner Appointment  
Kelli Barnaby, Portsmouth City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment  
Katie Gargano, Franklin City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment  
Sue McKinnon, Newfields Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment  
Timothy Horrigan, NH House of Representatives, Public Member, SOS Appointment  
Judith Rees, Data User, DHHS Appointment  
Carrie Kelly, Health Information Specialist, NHHA Appointment  
Theresa Pare Curtis, OIT CIO Appointment

***COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:***

David Scanlan, Deputy Secretary of State, SOS Appointment  
Andrea Kohler, Exeter Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment  
vacant, Municipal Data User, DHHS Appointment  
vacant, Funeral Director Association Appointment

***GUESTS:***

Christopher Bentzler, SOS IT  
Catherine Cheney, SOS IT  
Christopher Wilder, MSA, Vital Records  
Nicholl Marshall, Vital Records

**1. Call to Order:**

- Dr. David Laflamme read at 09:36 a notice from the governor that the Committee is authorized to meet electronically. Public access is available by telephone, and public notices had been provided. Dr. Laflamme called the attendance roll.

**2. Chair:**

- Dr. Laflamme is willing to be chair of the Committee again. Dr. Judith Rees moved to confirm Dr. Laflamme as chair of the Committee, and Mr. Tim Horrigan seconded. Dr. Laflamme administered a roll call vote; the Committee voted 11-0 to confirm Dr. Laflamme as chair.

**3. Introductions:**

- Dr. Laflamme worked with Ms. Gonyer on appointing new members for the Committee. The new members of the Committee introduced themselves. The other members of the Committee and guests also introduced themselves.

**4. Approval of Minutes:**

- Approval of the minutes of the meeting of November 21, 2019, has been postponed to the next meeting.

**5. COVID Update:**

- The COVID pandemic encouraged moving the drug usage questions in the birth module away from the Situational Surveillance feature to a permanent place on the birth worksheets. New Hampshire may be the first state in the nation to have COVID-related questions on birth records. This proves how important vital records can be during a pandemic.
- Discussion turned to how New Hampshire participates with other states on interoperability.

**6. Budget:**

- Discussion turned to the Fund's budget, which was distributed to members electronically before the meeting. Transfers to the state Department of Information Technology have significantly decreased over the last decade. Much of the balance of the Fund is allocated for ongoing projects. The Fund pays for more projects than information technology, such as the preservation project about a decade earlier.

## **7. IT Update:**

- Discussion turned to the deployments of the past year of the mobile app National Electronic Certification of Death (hereinafter “NeCOD”), New Hampshire Vital Records Information Network (hereinafter “NHVRIN”) and the new NHVRIN*plus*, all three of which are now running concurrently. Funeral directors, death pronouncers, and death certifiers do not operate in NHVRIN at all now, but they do operate in NHVRIN*plus*. Other users, such as town/city clerks, move between NHVRIN*plus* and NHVRIN. Whereas NHVRIN is stable and user-friendly, NHVRIN is browser dependent; NHVRIN*plus* can be used on other browsers. Other differences between NHVRIN*plus* and NHVRIN is that NHVRIN uses Oracle whereas NHVRIN*plus* uses SQL and has enhanced security features. DVRA received input from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (hereinafter “OCME”) in building NeCOD and many death users in building the new death module in NHVRIN*plus*.
- Ms. Catherine Cheney attended a Connectathon in January and showed how New Hampshire can transmit data securely. Ms. Cheney also attended a virtual Connectathon in September. DVRA and the OCME are working on a project to populate NeCOD data in the OCME’s Case Management System.

## **8. Digital Preservation:**

- Years ago, Mr. Brian Burford asked the Committee to purchase a device called an Archive Writer which writes information onto microfilm. The Archive Writer has already put New Hampshire births from 2002 to 2014 on microfilm, creating between 80 and 85 rolls of microfilm. Presently, 2015 births are now under quality control. Eventually, New Hampshire marriages and New Hampshire deaths will also be written onto microfilm. Microfilm can be placed in a safe storage area and last for five hundred years.

## **9. MSA Update:**

- About three hundred death certifiers were given registered for NHVRIN*plus* and NeCOD during the last three months. Mr. Christopher Wilder, the Mortality Surveillance Agent (hereinafter “MSA”), has visited various hospitals teaching death certifiers how to certify death electronically. COVID has temporarily ended in-person visits, but the MSA is creating a virtual training option for death pronouncers, particularly registered nurses at hospices and nursing homes.

#### **10. Old Business:**

- Discussion turned to the new permanent drug-related questions on the birth worksheets and how that data is used. There is currently no plan to show the data to the general public

#### **11. New Business:**

- Discussion turned to membership. Filling vacancies has been a priority. There is a difference between *ex officio* members and appointed members. It was stressed that this is an advisory committee, as the Committee's name suggests, and the chair welcomes ideas from the Committee's members.

#### **12. Next Meetings:**

- The next meetings are scheduled for Wednesday April 21, 2021 and Wednesday October 13, 2021.

#### **13. Adjournment:**

- Mr. Burford moved to adjourn and Ms. Theresa Pare Curtis seconded. Dr. Laflamme administered a roll call vote; the Committee voted 10-0, with one abstention, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 10:51.