

**641—97.6 (144) Medical certification of death.** The funeral director shall submit the completed fact of death portion of the certificate of death to the physician, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or medical examiner for the completion of the medical portion.

**97.6(1)** For a natural cause of death, the physician, physician assistant or advanced registered nurse practitioner in charge of the patient's care for the illness or condition which resulted in death shall complete and sign the medical certification within 72 hours after receipt of the death certificate from the funeral director or individual who initially assumed custody of the body.

**97.6(2)** If there is a non-natural cause of death, the state medical examiner or county medical examiner shall be notified and shall conduct an inquiry.

**97.6(3)** If the decedent was an infant or child and the cause of death is not known, a medical examiner's inquiry shall be conducted and an autopsy performed as necessary to exclude a non-natural cause of death.

**97.6(4)** If upon inquiry into a death, the state medical examiner or county medical examiner determines that a preexisting natural disease or condition was the likely cause of death and that the death does not affect the public interest as described in Iowa Code section 331.802(3), the state medical examiner or county medical examiner may elect to defer to the physician, physician assistant or advanced registered nurse practitioner in charge of the patient's preexisting condition the certification of the cause of death.

**97.6(5)** When an inquiry is required by the state medical examiner or county medical examiner, the state medical examiner or county medical examiner shall investigate the cause and manner of death and shall complete and sign the medical certification within 72 hours after determination of the cause and manner of death.

**97.6(6)** The medical certifier completing the medical certification of cause of death shall attest to the accuracy of the medical certification either by signature or by an electronic process approved by the state registrar.