

**Senate File 2254 - Introduced**

SENATE FILE 2254

BY LOFGREN

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act relating to the accurate completion and the correction  
2 of death certificates.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 144.26, Code 2024, is amended to read as  
2 follows:

3 **144.26 Death certificate.**

4 1. *a.* A death certificate for each death which occurs  
5 in this state shall be filed as directed by the state  
6 registrar within three days after the death and prior to final  
7 disposition, and shall be registered by the county registrar  
8 if it has been completed and filed in accordance with this  
9 chapter. A death certificate shall include the social security  
10 number, if provided, of the deceased person. All information  
11 including the certifying physician's, physician assistant's,  
12 or advanced registered nurse practitioner's name shall be  
13 typewritten.

14 *b.* A physician assistant or an advanced registered nurse  
15 practitioner authorized to sign a death certificate shall be  
16 licensed in this state and shall have been in charge of the  
17 deceased patient's care.

18 2. All information included on a death certificate may be  
19 provided as mutually agreed upon by the state registrar and  
20 child support services, including by automated exchange.

21 3. *a.* The county in which a dead body is found is the  
22 county of death. If death occurs in a moving conveyance,  
23 the county in which the dead body is first removed from the  
24 conveyance is the county of death.

25 *b.* If a decedent died outside of the county of the  
26 decedent's residence, the state registrar shall send a copy  
27 of the decedent's death certificate and any amendments to the  
28 county registrar of the county of the decedent's residence.  
29 The county registrar shall record a death certificate received  
30 pursuant to this paragraph in the same records in which the  
31 death certificate of a decedent who died within the county  
32 is recorded. The state registrar may provide the county  
33 registrars with electronic access to vital records in lieu of  
34 the requirements of this paragraph.

35 4. The department shall provide for correction and

1 substitution of a death certificate if evidence substantiating  
2 the correction or substitution is presented to the state  
3 registrar within twelve months of the filing of the death  
4 certificate. The death certificate shall be marked "amended"  
5 and comply with other requirements pursuant to sections 144.38  
6 and 144.41.

7 ~~4.~~ 5. a. The department shall establish by rule procedures  
8 for making a finding of presumption of death when no body  
9 can be found. The department shall also provide by rule  
10 the responsibility for completing and signing the medical  
11 certification of cause of death in such circumstances. The  
12 presumptive death certificate shall be in a form prescribed by  
13 the state registrar and filed in the county where the death was  
14 presumed to occur.

15 b. The department shall provide for the correction,  
16 substitution, or removal of a presumptive death certificate  
17 when the body of the person is later found, additional facts  
18 are discovered, or the person is discovered to be alive.

19 6. The department, in consultation with the state medical  
20 examiner, county medical examiners, the university of Iowa  
21 hospitals and clinics, the board of mortuary science, and  
22 the department of veterans affairs, shall implement training  
23 standards for individuals with a duty related to a death  
24 certificate to ensure the accurate completion and filing of a  
25 medical certification of death and a death certificate.

26 ~~5.~~ 7. Upon the activation of an electronic death record  
27 system, each person with a duty related to death certificates  
28 shall participate in the electronic death record system. A  
29 person with a duty related to a death certificate includes but  
30 is not limited to a physician as defined in [section 135.1](#), a  
31 physician assistant, an advanced registered nurse practitioner,  
32 a funeral director, and a county recorder.

33 EXPLANATION

34 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with  
35 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

1 This bill relates to the accurate completion and the  
2 correction of death certificates.

3 The bill provides that the department of health and  
4 human services (HHS) shall provide for the correction and  
5 substitution of a death certificate when substantiated evidence  
6 of a mistake is presented to the state registrar within 12  
7 months of the filing of the death certificate. The death  
8 certificate shall be marked "amended" and comply with other  
9 requirements pursuant to Code sections 144.38 (amendment of  
10 official record) and 144.41 (amending local records).

11 The bill also requires HHS, in consultation with the state  
12 medical examiner, county medical examiners, the university of  
13 Iowa hospitals and clinics, the board of mortuary science,  
14 and the department of veterans affairs, to implement training  
15 standards for individuals with a duty related to a death  
16 certificate to ensure the accurate completion and filing of a  
17 medical certification of death and a death certificate.