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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Physicians reminded of responsibilities for completing Iowa death certificates

DES MOINES, IA -- The Iowa Board of Medicine is working with the Iowa Office of the State Medical Examiner to heighten Iowa physicians' awareness of their responsibilities to complete death certificates in a timely manner.

A brochure prepared by the Medical Examiner's Office and the Iowa Department of Public Health's Bureau of Health Statistics, is posted on the Board's Website (www.medicalboard.iowa.gov) and is being distributed to physicians when they receive their Iowa license or renewal it.

The Medical Examiner's Office is concerned that the attending physician at a person's death may not be aware that state law requires the death certificate to be completed within 72 hours after receipt of the certificate from the funeral director. The prompt completion of the certificate is required so that families can close out the estate of the deceased person and begin to settle business and personal affairs.

The brochure answers many frequently asked questions about death certificates and includes a Web link to the Physician's Handbook on Medical Certification of Death, a publication of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Ga.