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MARK BOWDEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 11, 2014
CONTACT: Mark Bowden, (515) 242-3268 or
mark.bowden@iowa.gov

Physicians must use new system to prepare Iowa death certificates

DES MOINES, IA – The Iowa Board of Medicine is reminding physicians they must enroll to use Iowa’s new Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS), which becomes operational April 21, 2014.

Physicians who complete death certification registration will be required by state law to use the new system, which will make the filing of a death certificate more efficient and will reduce errors in the process. Death certificates must be completed promptly and accurately because these legal documents are used for administrative and public health purposes, as well as by the family to resolve estate issues and obtain insurance benefits.

For the past several months, the Iowa Department of Public Health’s Bureau of Health Statistics has provided training for funeral directors, physicians, and state and local registrars, all of whom must enroll to use the system by completing a participation agreement and user-access form. To receive this material, contact the Bureau of Health Statistics at (866) 309-0831 or email at ivesadmin@idph.iowa.gov

Death records are universally recognized as the primary source of death information, but registration processes have been labor intensive. The new electronic system eliminates the personal delivery of records to physicians for completion and signature, extensive and costly travel by funeral directors to file certifications, and the labor-intensive processing of paper records at the county recorder’s office and by the Bureau of Health Statistics.