

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

To The New Hampshire Department of State

- MINUTES -

Friday

March 25, 2016

-MINUTES-

Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

March 25, 2016

Archives & Records Building
2nd Floor Conference Room
71 South Fruit Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301-2410

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

David Scanlan, Deputy Secretary of State, SOS Appointment
Stephen M. Wurtz, State Registrar
Timothy Horrigan, NH House of Representatives, Public Member, SOS Appointment
Tricia Piecuch, Nashua City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Nicole Bottai, Windham Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Janice Bonenfant, Concord City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Todd Rainier, Hooksett Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Erin Piazza, Health Information Specialist, NHHA Appointment
Bruce Riddle, Data User, DHHS Appointment
Brian Burford, State Archivist

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Thomas A. Andrew, MD, Medical Examiner Appointment
Theresa Pare-Curtis, OIT CIO Appointment
Peter Morin, Funeral Director Association Appointment
Ashley Conley, Municipal Data User, DHHS Appointment
Brook Dupee, DHHS Appointment

GUESTS:

Dan Cloutier, SOS IT
Chris Bentzler, SOS IT
Jeff King, SOS IT
Nicholl Marshall, Vital Records

1. Call to Order, Introductions, and Approval of Minutes:

- Ms. Tricia Piecuch called the meeting to order at 09:32 with a quorum present.
- Ms. Piecuch introduced two new members of the Committee, State Representative Timothy Horrigan and Hooksett Town Clerk Todd Rainier. Introductions of all present were made.
- Ms. Piecuch asked the Committee to review the minutes of the October 2 meeting. Mr. Brian Burford made a motion to approve the minutes the October 2 meeting, seconded by Mr. Stephen Wurtz. A vote was taken and all were in favor; the minutes were approved.

2. VRIFAC Budget:

- Ms. Piecuch invited Mr. David Scanlan to discuss the VRIFAC budget. Mr. Scanlan indicated that nothing much has changed regarding receipts and expenditures. The bottom line balance continues to grow. The Department did settle with Netsmart, who was the software vendor engaged to build a new NHVRIN system, but the vendor was not up to the task. Thus the relationship was severed and the contract was settled based on the Department's position. This eliminates a potential \$1 million liability.
- Ms. Piecuch asked if the money has been taken out of the budget presented to the Committee; Mr. Scanlan answered that the Department received an invoice for an amount just under \$100,000 and that it would later be taken out of the figures in the budget. Ms. Piecuch says much can be done with this money to continue to move the vital records system forward, especially with all the projects being undertaken.
- Mr. Scanlan noted there are a couple of vacancies and that a process to fill those positions has begun. Ms. Piecuch noted that Ms. Laurie Harrigan has left and Ms. Karen Festa will leave soon. Ms. Piecuch also observed that Ms. Harrigan has done so much to move projects forward. Mr. Scanlan said that between Ms. Harrigan and Ms. Festa, things were working extremely well and desired to recreate that capacity. Ms. Piecuch said those positions will be need to bring any projects forward so that unnecessary burden does not fall on DVRA.
- Mr. Brian Burford asked if there was a budget for Fiscal Year 2017; Mr. Scanlan responded in the negative, adding that unless there is a new initiative the Committee wishes to undertake, the budget should be static. Ms. Piecuch said that something in the information technology update might make a change in the

budget. Ms. Piecuch mentioned that in previous meetings there has been mention of going back to a grant program for the Archives.

3. IT Update - Staffing:

- Ms. Piecuch said it was important to continue the momentum of where DVRA is going with its projects, and that DVRA is in a great place compared to where DVRA was previously.

4. IT Update – Virtualized Environment:

- Mr. Chris Bentzler said for the virtualized environment, he received a quote of \$289,000 for the hardware needed to get it in place. Mr. Dan Cloutier worked diligently to get that price down to \$250,000. The budget allowed for \$314,000. The software cost included SQL licensing which cost \$40,000, thus still under-budget. The virtual environment is planned to be up by the end of this fiscal year.
- Mr. Burford asked what the virtual environment is supposed to do; Mr. Bentzler responded that the virtualized environment is supposed to move the NHVRIN system from its current location at the state Department of Information Technology and then the Department of State will be able to handle all the systems in-house in a virtualized environment. There is designed to be redundancy in place so if there is any kind of failure, a back-up plan will get the system up and running. Mr. Jeff King said that this is completely stand-alone with no ties to DoIT.
- Ms. Piecuch said that some DoIT staff are still being paid, but asked if this would cut DoIT totally; Mr. Bentzler believes that the answer is in the affirmative because the servers are still being rented at the DoIT space, including NHVRINWeb servers and NHVRIN servers and new virtualized servers intended to be used for the new NHVRIN system, the latter being reallocated to other needs. Mr. Burford said that DVRA will not be completely independent of DoIT.

5. IT Update – SOSKB Update:

- Ms. Piecuch said that it had been hoped by next meeting there would be a more stable plan. Mr. Bentzler said that DVRA has been working with CNSI, the software vendor, if a financial package into NHVRIN could be added and replace the current SOSKB system. Ms. Piecuch said with the money available, it could be used to ensure this financial package is complete.
- Ms. Piecuch explained to those who do not handle the financial part of vital records that every time a clerk issues a vital record for fifteen dollars, the state is allocated eight dollars. For every additional copy which costs ten dollars, the

state is allocated five dollars. At the end of the month, when an invoice is received from the state, a reconciliation process is performed based on the number of vital records issued. If it can be inclusive in the NHVRIN system, it will be beneficial to all parties.

6. IT Update – EVVE:

- Mr. Bentzler said that EVVE is part of the STEVE system and DVRA can put records into the STEVE system to be sent to the CDC and other states, so that a verification occurs through an automated process.
- Mr. Wurtz explained that DVRA disseminates information to the CDC and other states through an interstate exchange of vital records. STEVE stands for State & Territorial Exchange of Vital Events. DVRA has a cooperative with all states to share data (e.g. when a state's resident dies in another state). STEVE is the way states transmit information back and forth. In the past, states sent paper and the data entry people at DVRA would key them, which would take a long time to get into the system, whereas STEVE, being totally electronic, will allow to send and receive information electronically, thus a major step forward. Mr. Wurtz noted that DVRA has proposed a solution to enhance the transfer and timeliness of data because one of the goals which CDC is paying DVRA is to improve the timeliness of information sent to CDC. New Hampshire has a very respected position with the CDC because of what DVRA has done. One reason being is that New Hampshire will be the only state with an automated STEVE process, which will begin April 1; CDC was told that nobody could do this, but New Hampshire with its vendor did it.
- Mr. Bentzler said that for EVVE, there was an upgrade which improved the security of the Java platform and the web services. Mr. Wurtz explained that EVVE is the Electronic Verification of Vital Events, which is the hub used by agencies of different states and federal government for a verification process of New Hampshire events (e.g. if the Passport Agency wanted to verify a record, they would send a written request and DVRA would do it for free, which tied up staff; EVVE allows them to bounce up against the database and DVRA would be paid for their search). Mr. Wurtz further explained that New Hampshire is one of a few dozen states which uses EVVE and NAPHSIS is strongly promoting EVVE.
- Ms. Piecuch noted that a marginal note is not added to a record when an Affidavit of Paternity is filed, then when the parents go to the Social Security Administration to get a Social Security card, the Social Security Administration will want verification of how a name changed; if a parent does not have a copy

Affidavit of Paternity, the Social Security Administration may tell the parents to go to court and get a legal name change. But they can connect to the EVVE program and see that the child's name was changed. Ms. Piecuch further explained that her office is telling the Social Security Administration that they need to use the EVVE program as they have access to it and it is a wonderful program.

- Mr. Wurtz said it would be better if more state agencies would use the EVVE system. There is a Memorandum Of Understanding with the state Department of Health & Human Services. Local clerks may see benefits to EVVE, such as when recruiters want to verify an individual's birth information; there are hundreds of such requests each month, so this will reduce the traffic in clerks' and DVRA offices. EVVE gives them real-time opportunity to verify New Hampshire events, and they are not getting anything to which they are not entitled.
- Mr. Bentzler said there was an update to the EVVE system to improve the security of EVVE and the transmissions and upgrade the web servers to a newer platform; the goal was to be completed on March 31 and it was finished on March 15. Mr. Wurtz added that New Hampshire has a security standard for sharing of data and the platforms on which it is done.

7. IT Update – Oracle to SQL Migration Analysis Update:

- Ms. Piecuch said that at the previous meeting, the Committee authorized up to \$38,060 for an analysis and asked if it was done. Mr. Bentzler responded that the vendor CNSI has pushed the completion of the analysis to the first quarter of 2017 because of the other ongoing projects and the migration is not critical to operations.

8. IT Update – NHVRIN Scanners Update:

- Mr. Bentzler said DVRA has received the scanners and it will be later determined where the scanners will sit in the DVRA area.

9. IT Update – KFI Project:

- Ms. Piecuch referenced a purple sheet which was available to Committee members upon arrival. Mr. Bentzler said DVRA has a tremendous amount of old records which DVRA wants to have available electronically. Through the years, DVRA staff has been tasked with manually keying those records. CNSI was tasked to find a solution to scan all these records so that they may be available through the NHVRIN system. After discussions, the best process was determined to scan every record, key from the image all the data elements required to get a

record into NHVRIN. CNSI partnered with a third-party vendor called Databank who is known in the industry as a company who can take on this type of a project at a large scale and provide results. Databank spent the last summer on location scanning images. DVRA staff took the records out of the boxes and organizing them into other boxes so that when Databank arrived, they could start imaging the records. Throughout the entire summer, the process was like an assembly line; DVRA staff worked weekends to complete this project. At the end, there were a little over one million records which had been scanned and Databank has been keying all those records. At this point in time, DVRA has received all the birth images and birth data records; eventually, not only will the data be in NHVRIN, but a copy of the image will be available for review. DVRA has now been validating the arriving data; when Databank provides those files, DVRA provides those files to CNSI who will take the data and populate NHVRIN with the assistance of Mr. Jeff King. DVRA is now going through the eighth iteration of data to provide any issues with that data to CNSI so the data can be as accurate as can be and put the data into NHVRIN. First was birth records and next was marriage records; DVRA is now receiving marriage records from Databank a pilot phase of death and going through the same process of accuracy. DVRA staff look at the data and ensure Databank is mapping the correct data elements to the correct fields. The flow of information between the groups is incredible. DVRA has already received 72% of the records that were scanned.

- Mr. Wurtz reiterated that it takes a tremendous amount of effort to do this because data is not any good if things are not the way they should be. DVRA staff meets three or four times a week to make random checks of the image to the electronic file. Mr. Wurtz is happy to report that their error rate is very small. Mr. Wurtz noted that Databank does not see the records in total but rather take snippets so that a data entry operator keys only the snippets, minimizing the confusion of other data. Databank will not key records until DVRA approves the pilot. Mr. Wurtz has heard horror stories on this type of project from other states, but New Hampshire has not seen them. But in comparison with other states, no one has dedicated the amount of effort that DVRA and the vendor Databank has done. Databank had told DVRA that the people at Databank were experts and would prove their worth and they pulled it off. Eventually, all town/city clerks will be able to issue birth records back to 1935, death records back to 1965, marriage records back to 1960, and divorce records back to 1979, and NHVRIN users will have the image of the record and its amendments. The scanners were purchased because, going forward, as amendments are made to a record, the documentation must be scanned and added to the file. In the future, Mr. Wurtz would like to have a discussion about locking down local clerks from entering abstract records. It is estimate that about 97% of the work local clerks have done in the last two

years is incorporated into the dates mentioned previously. Mr. Wurtz suggested examples that if a customer asks a local clerk for an early vital record, a local clerk could issue a photocopy or the local clerk will ask DVRA to enter the record, but it is still being explored. But DVRA has learned that records keyed at the local level with good intentions are plagued with errors, and documents are going out which the registrar can not validate; this will be less likely if DVRA locks down the process. This does not mean that the record scanned is correct, but it is frozen in time and correction procedures can be applied to it so that everyone will issue the same document. Mr. Wurtz says there will be a subcommittee on this in the next year. Mr. Wurtz observes that Mr. King knows locking down the system will solve a lot of problems.

- Ms. Bonenfant asked if there is any plan to scan records older than the dates mentioned previously since she gets regular requests for records older than those dates; Mr. Wurtz answered that statistically the average work done by the local clerk is covered and that those dates were not selected by accident. Mr. Wurtz added a next plan may be to get Databank back on site and continue to scan more records, but it costs money to do this. Mr. Wurtz worries constantly about the credibility of a New Hampshire record when it is issued and certified by a local clerk and holds up in court because the record should not be plagued with problems. Ms. Bonenfant said her office has had an influx of requests for delayed records lately and asked if they have been incorporated into the system; Mr. Wurtz said that the delayed records will be electronically available but delayed records can be scanned and put the scanned images in NHVRIN. Ms. Bonenfant added that she would like to see all records in NHVRIN in case something happened to the hard copy records. Mr. Wurtz said access to these records and access to the images are important although genealogists may not be interested in the scanned images as much as the original. Ms. Bonenfant asked if DVRA has copies of all the records the local clerks have; Mr. Wurtz responded in the negative, citing an example yesterday when he found a 1989 death which a small town had but DVRA never received the record; it was discovered because DVRA did not find it and called the local clerk, who did have it even though it was misfiled in the local clerk's records. But DVRA added it to the database.
- Dr. Bruce Riddle asked if DVRA can sell images found on ancestry.com; Mr. Wurtz answered that the law prohibits wholesale selling of vital records but births at least 100 years old, as well as death, marriage, and divorce records at least 50 years old, are public records, which are available on ancestry.com. Mr. Wurtz also recalled that two volunteers from the LDS church whose mission for a year was to image records on microfilm and the payment DVRA received was a second copy of the microfiche for backup.

- Ms. Piecuch says she has concerns about locking out local clerks from entering abstract records in future. Ms. Piecuch also expressed concern that towns issue records without state file numbers from the abstract table instead of records with state file numbers already in the work tables. Ms. Piecuch asked if duplicates in the abstract table will be deleted; Mr. Bentzler responded in the affirmative, with one more step to remove duplicates. Mr. Wurtz that this goes along with the KFI project, so eventually there will be analysis of duplicates and DVRA will strip away those abstract records without state file numbers; Mr. King does this now. Ms. Piecuch is still concerned that, unlike larger towns and cities who regularly issue records, small towns which issue one or two per year may issue records from the abstract table without state file numbers; Mr. Wurtz said this is a topic of discussion for the regional clerks meetings.
- Mr. Wurtz said he received a telephone call yesterday from someone living in Schenectady, New York. She was a former resident of New Hampshire who gave birth in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. She had requested birth certificates for each of her children. She called Mr. Wurtz to say that New Hampshire's record was received within two days after placing the order online, whereas Massachusetts could process it possibly in eight to twelve weeks and Connecticut could process it in six to eight weeks. Ms. Piecuch recalled a posting from the past stating that if a customer wanted a record from California, it would take three to six months.

10. NHVRIN Support & Maintenance:

- Mr. Bentzler said that on February 17, NHVRIN version 8.5.6 was deployed. It was an important release because it brought together the two different versions of NHVRIN which had been running for about a year because of changes to marriage laws. Throughout that time, the NHVRIN framework had to be upgraded for all modules, so DVRA worked with the vendor to test every menu option before releasing it to ensure it would work properly. Issues have been discovered which DVRA is now addressing and currently testing. The next release should be deployed soon for all users once testing is complete.
- Mr. Bentzler said the funeral directors have a process where they notify physicians through fax or e-mail, and a tremendous amount of physicians use fax rather than e-mail but the fax server has been problematic for some time now. CNSI modified NHVRIN so that it used a fax service as opposed to using a physical fax server. Now DVRA can log on to the fax service to see if there are any issues. One example was a couple of weeks ago where Mr. Bentzler called and validated that a fax number was no longer in service.

- Mr. Bentzler continued that other issues resolved were compatibility issues with newer versions of Internet Explorer. The death module had work-arounds mostly for funeral directors to get death records entered in NHVRIN.
- Mr. Bentzler added that NHVRIN version 8.5.8, which hopefully will go into production soon, will address issues which DVRA has found in version 8.5.6.
- Mr. Wurtz asked if NHVRIN as a software package is holding its own or if all these issues are hampering DVRA; Mr. Bentzler responded that because DVRA had planned to go to Netsmart for a newer different version of NHVRIN, the framework of NHVRIN and the .net in which it was built were never upgraded during the years of working with Netsmart. When DVRA made the changes to the marriage module, DVRA did not have the software to do the upgrade, so DVRA had to upgrade three or four revisions of the development software just to get to a current platform. When the current vendor looked at DVRA's system, the vendor responded that they could not work with it but it had to go through iterations of upgrades just to troubleshoot before putting any changes to it. CNSI has made NHVRIN accessible to a newer platform and a virtual environment. Thus NHVRIN is ready for newer technology, framework, and .net. Mr. Wurtz said the NHVRIN team was surprised that NHVRIN, developed in 2003 and deployed in 2004, was frozen in time for ten year; as a result, DoIT missed opportunities to keep NHVRIN current, which costs DVRA lots of money to get NHVRIN up to date. Mr. Wurtz asked how could this be prevented in the future and avoiding a stale product; Mr. Bentzler said DVRA should utilize the vendor to keep up with technology and make a general continual upgrade of the system itself to keep it current. Mr. Wurtz asked if the vendor sees if a new .net version is available, will the vendor suggest upgrading the application; Mr. Bentzler responded that it would be a coordinated effort between the vendor and DVRA to keep up with the technologies. The vendor and DVRA work so closely now, the communication is there if a change in technology is foreseen by either party.
- Ms. Piecuch said that DVRA had gone out with an RFP looking for a new vendor to bring the system forward and Netsmart was chosen, but CNSI, the architect of NHVRIN, has stepped up to the plate. Ms. Piecuch recalls that the Committee has given \$265,000 per year for support and maintenance and Ms. Harrigan kept track of the monies. Ms. Piecuch asked if DVRA was still on target because she wants to know if DVRA has what is needed to continue moving forward; Mr. Bentzler does not have specific numbers now and Mr. Wurtz added that one of the challenges being faced is that there are so many projects happening with CNSI. With the loss of Ms. Harrigan, Mr. Wurtz had a meeting with CNSI last week and requests an accounting of where everything is. Mr. Wurtz said that as DVRA

finds issues in NHVRIN or develops a new system, DVRA ensures it is being charged properly.

- Ms. Piecuch observed that the list of Justices of the Peace is no longer listed on the marriage module. Mr. Wurtz said that he worked with someone in the office of the Secretary of State to get access to a list of Justices of the Peace and DVRA had put on the marriage module the ability to look up any JP. Ms. Piecuch said that this is an example of how when there is a new build, something breaks on the back end.
- Dr. Riddle said there are many things coming from the federal government's cyber initiative, and if something flows down from there, it could affect everyone. Dr. Riddle says that Microsoft invested much in Windows 10 and is expecting consumers to buy more Microsoft products. By locking down Windows 10, which will not talk to other companies' software, may force some companies not to continue business. Mr. Wurtz responded that one protection DVRA has is that the system is locked down to Windows 7, and when and if Windows 10 should be deployed, it will be stripped down of everything. The information technology staff members are reading journals to see what is forthcoming and to protect themselves. Dr. Riddle said that all software vendors want consumers to use exclusively their products and it gets harder to do otherwise, citing amazon.com as an example. Mr. Wurtz said one advantage gained by the present vendor is that they are at the same level as Microsoft and a good advocate of New Hampshire's security. Mr. Bentzler said that CNSI told DVRA while eCOD was being developed that different phones and different versions of software such as iOS and Android. DVRA wants to look forward to the future for supporting any software. Mr. Wurtz said DVRA never had this discussion with DoIT, but with the help of the vendor, DVRA thinks about these issues. Mr. Bentzler added that DVRA is looking at Windows 10 and the potential impact of that on upgrades because Microsoft has made Windows 10 free until July 29. Thus there is a push for the whole state government to take advantage of this upgrade since it could save the state millions of dollars. DVRA partners with DoIT for imaging solutions and Mr. Bentzler has been working with their imaging team to see what standards they are using for Windows 10 so it can better be determined what the issues are.

11. New Business:

- Ms. Piecuch recalls that Mr. Burford was going to return with something from the Archives Room. Mr. Burford has nothing at this point. Ms. Piecuch asked Mr. Burford to look at it and Mr. Burford agreed to do so. Ms. Piecuch observes that the Archives Room gets really busy.

12. NHVRIN Training Module:

- Mr. Bentzler said that NHVRIN training classes are scheduled again, starting in April and going to September. These are NHVRIN beginner training courses so if anyone is interesting in attending training, they can contact DVRA to get the dates, which are posted on NHVRIN.

13. NHVRIN Web Update:

- Mr. Bentzler said that DVRA is in the process of upgrading its NHVRINWeb application, which is DVRA's public facing application. Any person can go onto NHVRINWeb and create an account to perform searches on statistical information having to do with vital events in New Hampshire. It is intended that the back end be upgraded from an Oracle database to a SQL database. Testing is currently being performed. July is the goal to go live. Population data is still trying to be procured from Claritas and the vendor will incorporate that into NHVRINWeb. Mr. Wurtz added that DVRA is looking forward to having NHVRINWeb back online because it is a heavily used tool. For about six months, a statement has been posted on the site which says the site is under construction. Dr. Riddle said that Claritas creates inter-census estimates down to the town and county levels, but their track record in New Hampshire is C+ because Dr. Riddle's group used them for a while and calculated cancer rates; but when the new census results came out, the cancer rates changed dramatically because many of the estimates were off. Mr. Wurtz responded that Claritas was what the state Department of Health & Human Services recommended.
- Mr. Burford departed at 11:00am.

14. CDC Contract Extension Special Project:

- Mr. Wurtz said CDC approached DVRA and offered to extend the contract if DVRA does a couple of things, one of which is to automate STEVE, transmitting data on a daily basis. Mr. Wurtz learned last week that that the CDC had the expectation that no one could automate deaths through STEVE, but New Hampshire succeeded. NHVRIN generates a death file, then sends it to STEVE and STEVE disperses the record to wherever it must go. The expected deployment date is April 1. Births are a little more complicated, but if it works like what the vendor has produced, then DVRA should be in good shape.
- The other part of the contract extension was to improve the data quality of the causes of death in New Hampshire. DVRA developed the concept of a mobile app called eCOD, which stands for electronic Cause Of Death, and it will work on Android and Apple phones. Mr. Wurtz has a pilot which he can show to others.

The contract allows DVRA to create a pilot program. Mr. Wurtz has been in touch with Dr. Thomas Andrew, the Chief Medical Examiner, and his office will be the pilot for this application. In the office of the Chief Medical Examiner are forty to fifty ADMs who determine cause of death in the neighborhoods of New Hampshire; they will utilize this application and DVRA will supply them with tablets. The application works well and Mr. Wurtz shows it everywhere he goes. Problems for cause of death include timeliness and availability of computers; DVRA has stressed for certifiers to use the computer because they will have the benefits of edits built into the application. The eCOD system is utilizing a CDC product called VIEWS 2, the CDC's latest version of interactive cause of death edits, such as medical spellchecks. NHVRIN actually has it. If this application and the technology are presented to the physicians, then the physicians must be properly trained on causes of death. DVRA's responsibility is to query the physicians about their entries. DVRA has a plan to hire a medically trained professional to go throughout the state to train certifiers on how to use eCOD. DVRA has a goal of getting at least eighty percent of the state's physicians to transmit data to DVRA online by the end of 2017. This is an aggressive plan for the money received from the CDC, but much of it works hand in hand with what NHVRIN already has. The hiring process for this 20-25 hour-per-week job should be ongoing now and Mr. Wurtz has been in touch with Dr. Andrew, who has made contacts to his colleagues. That individual will work with DVRA staff to coordinate places and times when and where the person would reach out to the physicians. The eCOD system which Mr. Wurtz has available to view does not have any functionality, but the functionality will be available as early as next week, and that will start DVRA's testing of the application before it is deployed to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. Mr. Nicholl Marshall stated that about 25% of deaths are referred to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner but about 12% of deaths are certified by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

- Ms. Erin Piazza observed that from a hospital standpoint, most often a physician signs off on a death record because the arriving patients who ultimately expire usually require a physician's treatment. Mr. Wurtz responded that one of the deficiencies of the current system has is that an emergency room physician assigns a cause of death just after meeting the decedent, but the partial record is put into the cloud because there is no family or funeral director involved yet, and NHVRIN lacks that ability to do that. The new application will allow a physician to perform a pronouncement and certification at the time of the event, put it into the cloud, and the funeral director will then take the incomplete record and put the demographic information on the certified record.

- Dr. Riddle said that out-of-hospital deaths are currently a problem for him. Dr. Riddle explained that 30% of New Hampshire deaths are in hospitals and he suspects that it will be below 25% in a year or two.
- Mr. Wurtz said he was invited to participate in a death summit at Georgia Tech in November of last year and he pitched his plan called the “death worm” to Georgia Tech students. The death worm is an authorized revelation of a patient’s chart and a patient’s physician would be the one to authorize this. For example, if a physician learns that one of his/her patients expires, the physician may authorize and app to go into a patient’s chart and display it for another physician so that other physician may determine which condition did or did not contribute to the death. CDC and Georgia Tech picked up that project and now is being developed with Mr. Wurtz as a consultant. They are going to pilot this project and DVRA will likely be involved because of Mr. Wurtz’s involvement. No physician can know everything about the patient at the time the physician must certify death unless the physician has an opportunity to look at the file. One argument presented is a physician is good at coming up with diagnoses for reimbursement for Medicaid, which means if a person is being treated then logically a physician will have the information gathered before a death is certified. The CDC believes this will be the certification of death because technology will meet data because now a decedent may have only one or two causes of death when the decedent’s chart will have multiple causes.
- Mr. Scanlan departs at 11:22am.
- Ms. Piecuch notes that there are two hospitals in Nashua and those hospitals are not communicating with one another. Mr. Wurtz says that a central file is where the industry is going. Ms. Piazza and Dr. Riddle said that EPIC is the medical records guru.
- Dr. Riddle cited a national study which estimates that forty percent of death certificates are wrong. Dr. Riddle traces all cancer deaths in New Hampshire, and a high percentage of the time a physician will say that he/she did not treat the patient for cancer but only signed the death certificate as a courtesy. The death certificates certified by APRNs and PAs are horrible. Subsequently, Dr. Riddle’s department is unable to monitor conscientiously disease patterns in New Hampshire. Dr. Riddle also observes that nobody does autopsies anymore and would favor mandating autopsies. Dr. Riddle concludes that on death certificates, the date of death is accurate but everything else is not. Ms. Piecuch agrees, citing examples of keying older deaths. Rep. Horrigan noted that more younger people are dying of opiates, and such detail is needed to make more people understand

that it is a problem, but Dr. Riddle observed that a family may beg a physician not to put on the death certificate a certain cause of death.

- Mr. Wurtz said he is aware that Vermont has a similar automated registration system to that of New Hampshire because Vermont came to New Hampshire inquiring about New Hampshire's success and Mr. Wurtz worked with the developer in Vermont for about a year. Mr. Wurtz added that the CDC recognizes New Hampshire is still blazing a trail in vital records technology. DVRA's mission in the 1980's was to automate the process, and DVRA is still doing it and CDC has continued interest and helped fund some of it. Mr. Wurtz will have a teleconference this afternoon to talk to CNSI about what it will cost DVRA to perform the aforementioned STEVE initiative. Ms. Piecuch hopes staff will come on board to continue to help the DVRA team and move these projects forward. The fact that everyone else said automating STEVE could not be done but DVRA proved it could be done shows what type of a team DVRA is. Mr. Wurtz mentioned the KFI project was Ms. Harrigan's work as Mr. Wurtz and his staff do not have the time to tackle it. Ms. Piecuch hopes someone will have the same vision to move these programs and new initiatives forward.
- Mr. Wurtz said that DVRA is not necessarily as smart as anyone else in the country but DVRA is successful because DVRA goes back to the users for input, and the users worked hard with DVRA to be successful. This allows DVRA to make mistakes without getting blamed, as opposed to DVRA imposing a product which may not be correct and the users thus blame the state. There have been bumps along the way, but the hospitals, clerks, and funeral directors are part of the success so they are not critical when something happens. Mr. Wurtz said that Ms. Piecuch is a great asset because of her involvement in the Committee, her experience with previous automated versions, and her documentations of issues which DVRA can send to the vendor. Mr. Wurtz said that DVRA must duplicate any problems which a user finds before DVRA can send any problems to the vendor.
- Mr. Wurtz said that if anyone wants to learn more about eCOD, he has handouts displaying screenshots of what it looks like and is willing to demonstrate it downstairs. Ms. Piecuch suggested that a demonstration could be done by the next meeting; Mr. Wurtz answered that it will be done by the next meeting.

15. Old Business – Netsmart Contract Update:

- Ms. Piecuch mentioned that Mr. Scanlan had said that Netsmart has accepted what was proposed to them. Mr. Wurtz said that the Department made an assessment of what was owed to Netsmart in their good faith effort to help

DVRA. The Department put a price on it and Netsmart agreed that it was what they did for DVRA. The contract was completed last month, and DVRA walks away from it as a learning experience. Mr. Wurtz said that it was not a good fit for DVRA. Ms. Piecuch added that DVRA was probably too advanced for Netsmart's technology. Mr. Wurtz said that NHVRIN by far was more complex than what Netsmart was selling; Ms. Piecuch notes that Netsmart's product was an off-the-shelf product. Mr. Bentzler added that some parts could not be customized to fit what the current system has in place.

16. NEW business – travel budget:

- Ms. Piecuch said that at the beginning of last year, there were some ideas on the table, but things were still in flux such as legislation and Netsmart, but those issues are now past. Ms. Piecuch suggested the grant program a few years ago, where someone was hired to do assessments at the clerks' offices, but she would also like to examine what is needed for the NHVRIN system because there is a maintenance and support contract. Mr. Wurtz said NHVRIN is in a great position because it can do better things. Mr. Wurtz added that the big thing is the Oracle to SQL concern. When NHVRIN is on a modern platform, wholesale changes do not need to be made to NHVRIN but DVRA must be able to enhance NHVRIN. Mr. Wurtz believes that there is no need to replace what the users see, but a continual work on the back end is needed to keep it up to modern standards, deploying the latest technology and have a vendor who understands what the needs of DVRA are. Mr. Wurtz said a great vendor was found in CNSI, even though CNSI is not in the vital records business but more so Department of Defense and Medicaid. Ms. Piecuch said she would like to see an enhancement of the correction process. Mr. Wurtz said he is contemplating the ability for couple who want to get married to go online, answer all the questions, go to a town/city hall, look at the supporting documentation, and print out the license. Mr. Wurtz has heard from the larger cities that it takes time to key a marriage record, but would like to make sure that the statutory authority is present before proceeding.
- Ms. Bonenfant says there are so many errors on documents from the courts, so she suggests improving that system. Ms. Bonenfant also said that she deals with some entities which have a huge error rate, which impacts customer service, so if she is told that many of her records are wrong, she can recommend people to take additional training. Dr. Riddle noted that a large number of Texans share Social Security numbers, according to Texas death records. Mr. Wurtz says that training can not help accuracy problems, but if a firm has a large error rate, then the firm may need to find someone else with better accuracy to do data entry. The DVRA fax machine is filled with correction requests. Ms. Piecuch notes that the major

problem she has with corrections is that the customer is very upset and there is a marginal note on the record because the funeral home did not get it right the first time. Dr. Riddle said that he has a whole bunch of people in his data set who are supposed to be dead, but his staff can not find them in the National Death Index or the Social Security death index. Mr. Wurtz said that he is open for anything to help regarding training issues, but funeral directors, hospitals, doctors, and clerk still make mistakes. Mr. Wurtz said that on birth records there is a checkbox for the phrase “Unknown”, but jurisdictions are held to a certain level of acceptance on unknown entries. “Unknown” means a person absolutely could not find an answer to a given question. Mr. Wurtz added that Mr. Marshall can run statistics on each facility on unknowns and DVRA recently received a pretty pointed e-mail from the CDC telling New Hampshire to work on unknowns. This will be a hot topic during the Birth Data Quality Committee meeting in April. Ms. Piecuch notes that it can be determined when there is a change in staff at hospitals because the error rate from that hospital increases.

- Ms. Bottai asked if each person can be assigned a folder and the person’s birth, marriage, divorce, and death records could be placed in that folder; Mr. Wurtz suggest that at some day this could be. The electronic medical record suggests it is possible. Mr. Wurtz says that there are some people who believe DVRA does that now.

17. Next meeting & adjournment:

- Ms. Piecuch said the next meeting date would be Friday September 23. Mr. Rainer moved to adjourn and Dr. Riddle seconded the motion. No discussion was made on the motion. The vote was taken, and all were in favor; the motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 11:57.