

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 296

Session of
1977

INTRODUCED BY A. K. HUTCHINSON, FEBRUARY 9, 1977

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, FEBRUARY 9, 1977

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of June 29, 1953 (P.L.304, No.66), entitled "An
2 act providing for the administration of a statewide system of
3 vital statistics; prescribing the functions of the State
4 Department of Health, the State Advisory Health Board and
5 local registrars; imposing duties upon coroners,
6 prothonotaries, clerks of orphans' court, physicians,
7 midwives and other persons; requiring reports and
8 certificates for the registration of vital statistics;
9 regulating the disposition of dead bodies; limiting the
10 disclosure of records; prescribing the sufficiency of vital
11 statistics records as evidence; prescribing fees and
12 penalties; and revising and consolidating the laws relating
13 thereto," further regulating death certificates.

14 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
15 hereby enacts as follows:

16 Section 1. Section 501, act of June 29, 1953 (P.L.304,
17 No.66), known as the "Vital Statistics Law of 1953," amended
18 July 9, 1971 (P.L.213, No.38), is amended to read:

19 Section 501. Death and Fetal Death Registration:

20 Certificates to be Filed.--A certificate of each death or fetal
21 death which occurs in this Commonwealth shall be filed within
22 ninety-six (96) hours after the death or fetal death or within
23 ninety-six (96) hours after the finding of a dead body or fetal
24 remains. In every instance, the certificate shall be filed prior

1 to the issuance of a permit for interment or other disposition
2 of the dead body or fetal remains. The [person] funeral director
3 in charge of interment or of removal of the dead body or fetal
4 remains from the registration district shall file the
5 certificate with any local registrar who shall be authorized to
6 issue certified copies of such death.

7 Section 2. Sections 502 and 503 of the act, amended November
8 21, 1967 (P.L.516, No.250), are amended to read:

9 Section 502. Death and Fetal Death Registration: Information
10 for Certificates.--In preparing a certificate of death or fetal
11 death, the [person] funeral director in charge of interment or
12 of removal of a dead body or fetal remains from the registration
13 district shall obtain the required information. The following
14 persons shall supply the information certified by their
15 respective signatures:

16 (1) Personal information concerning the deceased or the
17 fetal death shall be supplied by the person best acquainted with
18 the facts.

19 (2) The medical certification, except in the event of a
20 referral to the coroner pursuant to section five hundred three
21 of this act, shall be supplied (i) in the case of a death, by
22 the physician or (ii) dentist who is a staff member of an
23 approved hospital who attended the deceased during the last
24 illness, provided the death occurs in the hospital and the
25 deceased had been admitted on the dental service, and (iii) in
26 the case of a fetal death, by the attending physician.

27 Section 503. Death and Fetal Death Registration: Coroner
28 Referrals.--The local registrar or [person] funeral director in
29 charge of interment or other person having knowledge of the
30 death or fetal death shall refer to the coroner the following

1 cases: (1) where no physician or dentist who is a staff member
2 of an approved hospital was in attendance during the last
3 illness of the deceased or in the case of a fetal death where
4 there was no attending physician, or (2) where the physician or
5 dentist who is a staff member of an approved hospital in
6 attendance during the last illness of the deceased or the
7 attending physician in the case of a fetal death is physically
8 unable to supply the necessary data, or (3) where the
9 circumstances suggest that the death was sudden or violent or
10 suspicious in nature or was the result of other than natural
11 causes. In every instance of a referral under this section, the
12 coroner shall make an immediate investigation and shall supply
13 the necessary data, including the medical certification of the
14 death or fetal death.

15 Section 3. Section 504 of the act, amended July 9, 1971
16 (P.L.213, No.38), is amended to read:

17 Section 504. Death and Fetal Death Registration: Permits
18 Concerning Dead Bodies and Fetal Remains.--No person shall
19 dispose of a dead body or fetal remains until a local registrar
20 issues a permit therefor. The local registrar shall issue the
21 permit only after the [person] funeral director in charge of
22 interment or removal has filed with the local registrar a
23 certificate of death or fetal death and has complied with all
24 regulations with respect to the issuance of the permit.

25 The sexton or other person in charge of any premises in which
26 bodies are interred or cremated shall not allow the interment or
27 cremation of any dead body or fetal remains unless a permit
28 issued under this section is presented to him. The sexton or
29 other person in charge of such premises shall indorse upon each
30 permit presented to him the date of interment or cremation, over

1 his signature, and shall return the permit so indorsed to the
2 local registrar of his district within ten days from the date of
3 interment or cremation.

4 Section 4. This act shall take effect immediately.