

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2011

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HOUSE DRH30147-MG-52A (03/03)

Short Title: Allow PAs and NPs to Sign Death Cert.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Hollo, Brubaker, Dollar, and Justice (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS AND NURSE PRACTITIONERS  
3 TO COMPLETE MEDICAL CERTIFICATIONS AS TO THE CAUSE OF DEATH FOR  
4 DEATH REGISTRATION.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 90-18.1 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

7 "(f) Any medical certification completed by a physician assistant for a death certificate  
8 shall be deemed to have been authorized by the physician approved by the Board as the  
9 supervisor of the physician assistant, and the supervising physician shall be responsible for  
10 authorizing the completion of the medical certification."

11 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 90-18.2 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

12 "(e1) Any medical certification completed by a nurse practitioner for a death certificate  
13 shall be deemed to have been authorized by the physician approved by the boards as the  
14 supervisor of the nurse practitioner, and the supervising physician shall be responsible for  
15 authorizing the completion of the medical certification."

16 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 130A-115(c) and (d) read as rewritten:

17 "(c) The medical certification shall be completed and signed by the physician in charge  
18 of the patient's care for the illness or condition which resulted in death, except when the death  
19 falls within the circumstances described in G.S. 130A-383. In the absence of the physician or  
20 with the physician's approval, the certificate may be completed and signed by an associate  
21 physician, a physician assistant in a manner consistent with G.S. 90-18.1(f), a nurse practitioner  
22 in a manner consistent with G.S. 90-18.2(e1), the chief medical officer of the hospital or  
23 facility in which the death occurred or a physician who performed an autopsy upon the  
24 decedent under the following circumstances: the individual has access to the medical history of  
25 the deceased; the individual has viewed the deceased at or after death; and the death is due to  
26 natural causes. When specifically approved by the State Registrar, an electronic signature or  
27 facsimile signature of the ~~physician~~ physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner shall be  
28 acceptable. As used in this section, the term electronic signature has the same meaning as  
29 applies in G.S. 66-58.2. The ~~physician~~ physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner shall  
30 state the cause of death on the certificate in definite and precise terms. A certificate containing  
31 any indefinite terms or denoting only symptoms of disease or conditions resulting from disease  
32 as defined by the State Registrar, shall be returned to the person making the medical  
33 certification for correction and more definite statement.

34 (d) The ~~physician~~ physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or medical  
35 examiner making the medical certification as to the cause of death shall complete the medical



1 certification no more than three days after death. The ~~physician~~ physician, physician assistant,  
2 nurse practitioner, or medical examiner may, in appropriate cases, designate the cause of death  
3 as unknown pending an autopsy or upon some other reasonable cause for delay, but shall send  
4 the supplementary information to the local registrar as soon as it is obtained."

5 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2011.