

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2011

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HOUSE BILL 331
Committee Substitute Favorable 3/22/11

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

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 14, 2011

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 "(e1) 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(e1), a nurse
22 practitioner in a manner consistent with G.S. 90-18.2(e1), the chief medical officer of the
23 hospital or facility in which the death occurred or a physician who performed an autopsy upon
24 the decedent under the following circumstances: the individual has access to the medical
25 history of the deceased; the individual has viewed the deceased at or after death; and the death
26 is due to natural causes. When specifically approved by the State Registrar, an electronic
27 signature or facsimile signature of the ~~physician~~physician, physician assistant, or nurse
28 practitioner shall be acceptable. As used in this section, the term electronic signature has the
29 same meaning as applies in G.S. 66-58.2. The ~~physician~~physician, physician assistant, or nurse
30 practitioner shall state the cause of death on the certificate in definite and precise terms. A
31 certificate containing any indefinite terms or denoting only symptoms of disease or conditions
32 resulting from disease as defined by the State Registrar, shall be returned to the person making
33 the medical 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
36 certification no more than three days after death. The ~~physician~~physician, physician assistant,
37 nurse practitioner, or medical examiner may, in appropriate cases, designate the cause of death



1 as unknown pending an autopsy or upon some other reasonable cause for delay, but shall send
2 the supplementary information to the local registrar as soon as it is obtained."

3 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2011, and applies to
4 certifications signed on or after that date.