

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2011

HOUSE BILL 331  
RATIFIED BILL

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS AND NURSE PRACTITIONERS  
TO COMPLETE MEDICAL CERTIFICATIONS AS TO THE CAUSE OF DEATH FOR  
DEATH REGISTRATION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

"(e1) Any medical certification completed by a physician assistant for a death certificate shall be deemed to have been authorized by the physician approved by the Board as the supervisor of the physician assistant, and the supervising physician shall be responsible for authorizing the completion of the medical certification."

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

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

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

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

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



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

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 14<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2011.

---

Walter H. Dalton  
President of the Senate

---

Thom Tillis  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

---

Beverly E. Perdue  
Governor

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ .m. this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2011