

eCedent™: Revolutionary Online Service promises to “End the Death Certificate Paper Chase”

Indiana, PA— For busy funeral directors and their staff, completing paper death certificates has long been a source of frustration—and a costly one, too, in terms of both time and expense. In many communities (depending on state regulations), it's common to find funeral home staffers driving all over town to personally “track down” physicians and obtain their hand-written signatures. In today's climate of soaring gas prices, getting a signature on paper from a doctor has become even more of a financial burden.

Add to this the antiquated practice of rolling a paper death certificate into a typewriter and painstakingly “lining up” the text so it falls into dozens and dozens of tiny information boxes—let alone the hassle of trying to fix a typo in one of those boxes—and you have a system that's long overdue for improvement. So many of our society's important records and documents are now handled via computer, but death certificates have remained stuck in the past—until now.

Enter eCedent™, a complete online service that promises to “end the death certificate paper chase” nationwide—and is already doing just that in its home state of Pennsylvania, with great success. Funeral homes, health information management departments, skilled nursing facilities, physicians, and coroners can complete their specific parts of the certificate via computer, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Users of eCedent log in to the service's secure website at www.eCedent.com by entering a username and password. They can create; fill out, track, sign, and print death certificates—from any computer with an Internet connection. No special hardware or software is needed, and the system uses automatic emails and/or text messages to keep everyone informed as the death certificate moves through the process.

How does eCedent™ work? First, depending on the procedure in a particular state, the death certificate is quickly and easily created online by the appropriate person. It is then immediately available, after a simple log-in, to all of the professionals involved in the process. Funeral directors, for example, can monitor all of their cases in real time, right from their desktops.

To help make eCedent™ as efficient as possible, physicians are invited to become members and use the service at no cost; then they simply log in, fill out cause of death and other applicable data fields, and sign online with an encrypted signature. eCedent™ will then inform the funeral home that the certificate is ready for printing. eCedent's secure service is indeed revolutionizing how death certificates are created and managed. The end result? An electronically signed, perfectly printed death certificate created faster and more efficiently than ever before—and printed right at the funeral home office.

“We understand the frustration of funeral directors and other professionals in the death certificate management process,” said **Chuck Conrad**, president of eCedent™. “That's why we created eCedent™—to make it possible for death certificates to be filled out and signed electronically. Our system eliminates all those ‘reminder’ phone calls, and the need to drive around and ‘chase’ physicians all over town. Funeral directors using eCedent™ can fill out and print completed certificates at their convenience, via computer—meaning no more physical pickup and delivery of paperwork. They'll also save time, reduce expenses, and be able to better serve their clients.”

How effective is eCedent™? Conrad explained that the system is now being beta-tested in Indiana County, Pennsylvania, and the results are impressive. Local physicians are completing and signing death certificates in as little as twenty minutes after the certificate's creation. Indiana Regional Medical Center, the area's leading healthcare facility, has mandated that all its death certificates must be done electronically via eCedent™. Many local funeral homes have already signed up, and are taking advantage of the systems many benefits.

“The program has removed many office hassles of obtaining and filing death certificates, said **Michael G. Minich**, supervisor of **Bowser-Minich Funeral Homes, Inc.** in Indiana, PA. “The expense in gasoline alone is significant to our operational costs.” Minich also praised eCedent's “ability to lower mistakes by making sure you don't miss any fields...[because] having the entire completed certificate in front of you on the computer screen, you can more easily catch errors before printing the document.”

He also reported that “[Our] efficiency of providing certified copies [of death certificates] to our families has increased, mostly by the day of the funeral services. This helps our families by having the documents available to process their many legal needs, any of which are funding sources needed to support survivors.”

“Finally,” he continued, “funeral directors have long moaned and groaned about the death certificate chase and hassle. Funeral directors will love eCedent™. My funeral friends who know about our testing activities want to sign up now.”

eCedent™ charges funeral homes per decedent to use its death certificate service. This same fee is then passed on directly to the client (and the system will easily print a receipt). The fee also includes unlimited death certificate printing privileges, so the funeral home can print test or sample copies as needed.

“Our funeral home members are telling us they’re very happy with the system’s user-friendly design. eCedent™ is amazingly quick and easy to use, and completely secure,” Conrad said.

Funeral directors aren’t the only ones praising eCedent™. The Hospital Council of Western Pennsylvania and eCedent™ have already announced a strategic partnership, with the goal of computerizing death certificate processing throughout the Commonwealth. “Hospital Council is pleased to introduce this innovative new technology to the Pennsylvanian healthcare marketplace,” said *John Piazza*, consultant to the Hospital Council of Western Pennsylvania. “eCedent’s creation of an electronic death certificate allows all involved in the death certificate process to save precious time and money, especially caregivers.”

Conrad agreed, “We’re very happy to be working with Hospital Council to bring eCedent™ to our customers, he said. “Hospital Council is widely known for helping its members locate the best products and the best values, and we believe eCedent™ meets that high standard.” eCedent™ reports that in a sample test, a hospital processing 40 deaths a month saved a minimum of 20 hours per week just by using eCedent™.

eCedent™ is also fully compliant with NCHS standards. And because death certificate procedures vary from state to state, eCedent™ can of course be customized, including a particular state’s needs for data integrity and reports. In states where the funeral home or coroner is the creator of the death certificate, eCedent™ allows those professionals to easily do their parts online. If the coroner has been involved, eCedent™ automatically notifies the funeral home (via email or text message) that the certificate is ready for printing.

Coroners and medical examiners can not only complete death certificates on-line, but also have the added benefit of a powerful, total incident management system built right into the program. Because eCedent™ is available online 24 hours a day, investigators can complete most of their paperwork and data entry right from the field. eCedent™ manages case data, including photographs, and autopsy and toxicology reports—all at the same convenient location. The system even offers an encrypted ecommerce module that lets third-party investigators purchase coroner reports and photos via online credit card transactions. Payments are made up-front, and data can then be downloaded for “instant” delivery.

“We’ve done our homework in designing eCedent™ drawing from many years of experience in the field.” Conrad said. “We’ve also had in depth focus groups with professionals from across the industry. We understand what they need, and we’re looking forward to revolutionizing how death certificates are handled.”

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