

The proposed Vital Statistics Act will revise and modernize the laws of Arkansas relative to Vital Records and Statistics. This Bill does not constitute an abrupt departure from our present Vital Statistics Act. This new Act has been fashioned after the model state Vital Statistics Act of 1977 published by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

This new law will reflect some of the social customs and practices that are happening frequently in Vital Records Registration. This Act has extended the time period for filing death certificates with the State office. We have expanded the law in giving physician's the privilege of appointing someone else to sign both birth & death certificates. It is hoped this procedure can remedy some of the delinquent certificates that are being filed. Penalties for fraudulent use of vital record information have been increased in hope of discouraging this activity.

Some of the practices such as surgical sex changes, records of presumptive deaths, and allowance of original records to be put onto microfilm are functions that are being carried out by our department. However, some of these new practices are not reflected in the current law. A summary of the most significant changes in the current revision compared with the 1965 Vital Statistics Act, Act 471 is attached.

The adoption of this Act, which is recommended by the National Center for Health Statistics will put the State of Arkansas in a position of having a Vital Records and Statistics law that will be current and uniform with other states' registration offices. What is generally required in another state for registering of a vital event will be required in our state.