

Death Certificates

Any physician, or covering physician, with treatment responsibilities or who has written any prescription (even if written without a visit) for the patient within the previous 12 months is considered an attending physician and is required to sign a death certificate within 24 hours. You may not know the full cause of death, but may have to surmise from the available data about the case, including talking to family, other health care professional who may have pronounced death, etc. Listing the cause of death on a death certificate isn't an exact science, but it is your responsibility as the attending physician. Death certificates aren't signed by the ER physician, the health professional who pronounces death, nor routinely by the Medical Examiner unless it is an autopsy case. Even autopsy cases by the ME may be sent back to the treating physician if not ruled unnatural cause. Physicians are also required to sign electronically using EDRS.