May 21, 2003

TO:      LOCAL REGISTRARS OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS
         CHIEF DEPUTY REGISTRARS
         COUNTY RECORDERS
         COUNTY CORONERS

SUBJECT: REPORTING OF VITAL EVENT RECORDS IN RELATION TO
         HIPAA (HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND
         ACCOUNTABILITY ACT) REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

New national health information privacy standards have been issued
pursuant to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of
1996 (HIPAA). These new regulations became effective April 14,
2003. They provide protection for certain individually identifiable
health data, referred to as protected health information (PHI).

As a result of these new federal requirements, you may be contacted
by health providers concerned about reporting health information
used for public health purposes.

Disclosure of PHI for vital records

PHI may be disclosed, however, without individual authorization for
purposes of preparing vital records, such as birth and death. PHI
may also be disclosed to public health authorities authorized by law
to collect or receive the information for the purpose of preventing or
controlling disease, injury, or disability, including but not limited to
public health surveillance, investigation, and intervention.

Reference: 45 Code of Federal Regulations 164.512
Attached please find a sample letter and supporting information that may be used to inform covered entities that the reporting of vital event records is exempt from HIPAA requirements. Also attached is federal law information relating to HIPAA and state statutes requiring the collection of vital event records.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact your Policy/County Analyst.

Original signed by:

Michael L. Rodrian, Chief
Center for Health Statistics