DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

National Center for Health Statistics
6525 Belcrest Road, Room 820
Hyattsville, Maryland 20782-2003

December 7, 2000

Dear Colleague:

Over the past several months, NCHS and several of our State colleagues have been working on implementing the new U.S. Standard Certificates of Live Birth and Death and the Fetal Death Report. As part of that process, we have developed a set of specifications for collecting and reporting the items on the birth and death certificates. George Van Amburg, former Michigan State Registrar, has been working with us under contract on this project. The purpose of these specifications is to clarify and define explicitly each item; to identify the best sources for the information sought in each item; and to promote uniformity in data collection across registration areas. The draft specifications for the death certificate are now complete and we are enclosing a set. We would appreciate your reviewing the specifications. Please feel free to ask any questions or provide any comments. Our goal is that all the registration areas will be able to adopt these specifications when the revised certificates are fully implemented.

The specification for the race of the decedent item is not included in this package. It will be sent to you along with some background information in about one week.

If you have any specific or technical question, you may wish to contact staff in the Mortality Statistics Branch. Donna Hoyert (301-458-4279) and Ken Kochanek (301-458-4319) have been extensively involved in the development of these specifications. In order to keep the implementation process on schedule, we are asking that you provide your comments no later than January 12, 2001. If you wish, you may e-mail your comments to Stephanie Ventura (SVentura@cdc.gov); she will share them with appropriate staff and you will receive a response. Alternatively, you can mail your comments to me or Stephanie at the above address.

I want to thank you in advance for your assistance with this phase of the implementation process.

Sincerely,

Mary Anne Freedman
Director
Division of Vital Statistics

Enclosure