

**Wyoming Department of Health
Report to the Governor**

Vital Statistics Services - 2016 Annual Report - W.S. § 35-1-404(a)(v)

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Section 1. Executive Summary

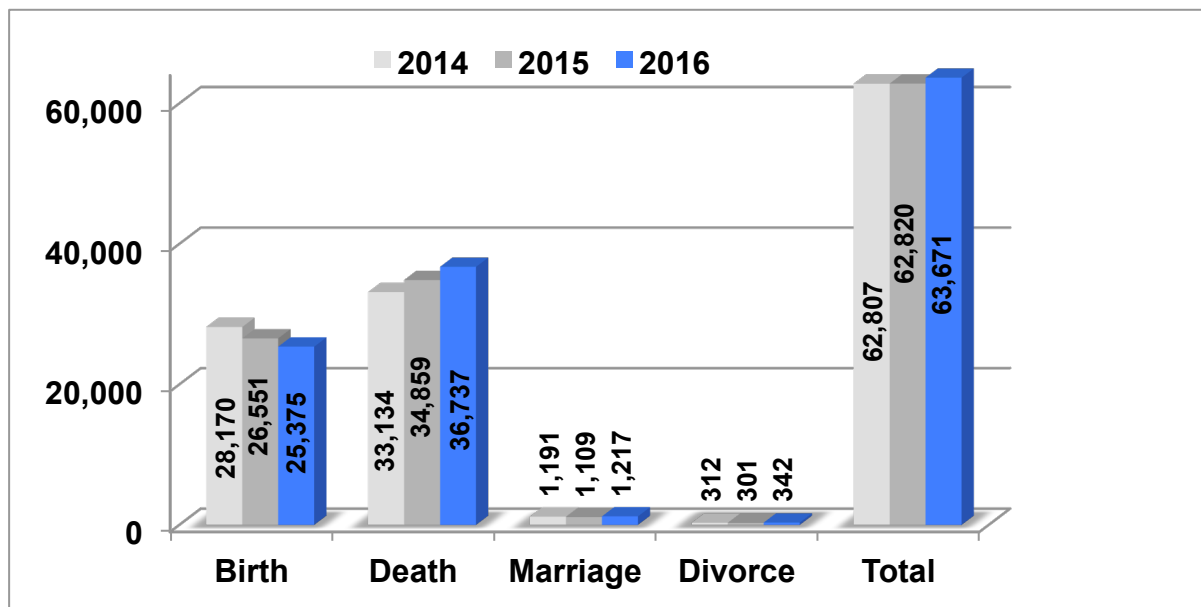
Wyoming Statute § 35-1-403 and W.S. § 35-1-404(a)(v) direct the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) State Registrar to install, maintain, and operate a system for all vital records, and to submit to the Governor an annual report of its administration.

The Vital Statistics Services (VSS) program is primarily administered with State General Fund dollars and distributes funds back to the general fund through the sale of certified copies of vital events, enumeration at birth, fact of death and statistical data.

This year, VSS staff, consisting of ten (10) state employees, answered 45,628 requests for services/certificates, and issued over 63,671 certified copies of Wyoming vital records to residents and customers (see Figure 1 below). These included:

- 25,375 Birth certificates;
- 36,737 Death certificates;
- 1,217 Marriage certificates; and,
- 342 Divorce certificates.

Figure 1: Certified Copies Issued



The mission of VSS is install, maintain and operate a system of vital records. The office maintains over one (1) million recorded events in a variety of media type; e.g., electronic, paper, microfilm and microfiche, and stores these records in geographically dispersed locations.

The vital records electronic registration system contains over one-half of Wyoming's vital records. The physical and virtual system(s) require secure access, in addition to a repository for the application and archived data. The electronic application has over 1,705 active users throughout Wyoming and adjoining states. Users consist of county

clerks, for marriages; clerks of district court to complete divorce filings, court ordered changes, and adoptions; funeral homes, coroners and primary health care providers, to file and complete death certificates; and hospital health information managers, midwives and nurse midwives, and physicians who file and certify births. The application requires around-the-clock access and reliability to ensure statutory filing requirements are met.

Vital Statistics Services continues to consolidate media into an electronic format, to provide a secure, accessible and long-term storage solution for vital records. The office expects to spend an estimated \$500,000 on this effort over the coming years. This undertaking will require changes to the vital records statutes, and associated rules and regulations used in the management, registration, access and digitization of the state's records.

Section 2. Specific Requirements of Statute

W.S. § 35-1-404(a)(v) directs the State Registrar to submit an annual report to the Governor regarding the administration of the vital records system.

Section 3. Response to Specific Requirements of Statute

This report is designed to provide an update of Wyoming's VSS information. The records and data, which make up this system, contribute to the state's ability to manage and identify health issues, track health status, and assess population trends.

The collection of vital event information (birth, death, marriage and divorce) is important for individuals to prove identity, obtain a driver's license, gain employment, access survivor's benefits or attend educational institutions. Data can also inform public policy and program planning. It is meant to inform residents and leaders, and support state health programs at all levels in analysis and decision-making.

Vital Statistics Services examines residence data for all births and deaths. This data accounts for all Wyoming residents, including those that give birth outside of the state. Exchange of resident event data, which occurs outside Wyoming, is transferred through federal applications/systems; i.e., the State Territorial Exchange of Vital Events (STEVE) and the Electronic Verification of Vital Events (EVVE). These systems have extended agreements for access and sharing data, signed between the registrar and the National Association of Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS) Executive Director. These applications have both an annual cost to subscribe and in return, provide funds for support and maintenance of Wyoming's VSS system. Marriage and divorce data reference only those events that occurred inside Wyoming.

Registration Activities

Table 1, below, illustrates the total number of vital events that were recorded in calendar years 2012 – 2016.

Table 1: Summary of recorded vital events

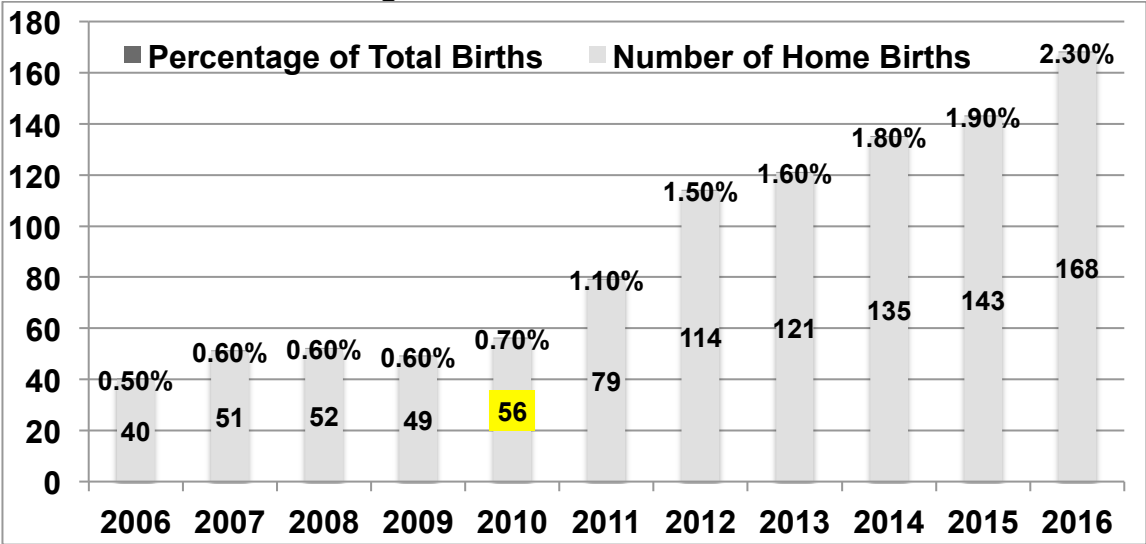
Year	Vital Events				Est. pop. (thousands)
	Births	Deaths	Marriages	Divorces	
2012	7,576	4,468	4,507	2,564	576.4
2013	7,617	4,469	4,400	2,482	582.6
2014	7,693	4,633	4,476	2,443	584.1
2015	7,716	4,744	4,306	2,435	586.1
2016	7,384	4,706	4,145	2,462	585.5

Resident births

A total of 7,384 births were reported to Wyoming residents during the calendar year 2016 (see Table 2 above). Of these births, 819 births occurred outside of the state for Wyoming residents; this number has increased when compared to previous years. For the last five (5) years, Wyoming’s birth rate has remained at approximately 13 births per 1,000 residents and continues slightly above the national average.

During this reporting period, Wyoming experienced an increase in both resident, assisted home births and out of state births. Communities in southern Wyoming have experienced the greatest increase in out of state births. Since the implementation of the Midwives Licensure Act in 2010, Wyoming has experienced an increase in assisted home births, increasing in number by almost three (3) times following the Act’s inception (See Figure 2, below).

Figure 2: Assisted Home Births



Teenage pregnancies

Wyoming continues to experience a downward trend in teenage pregnancies. The numbers have stabilized following a decrease over the last five (5) to seven (7) years, as demonstrated in Table 2, below. Although we are seeing a decrease in our numbers, Wyoming continues to experience a higher teen birth rate than the national average.

Table 2: Teenage Birth Rate

Year	Wyoming Rate Per 1,000	U.S. Rate Per 1,000
2012	34.6	29.4
2013	30.2	26.5
2014	30.6	24.2
2015	27.8	22.3
2016	26.2	20.3

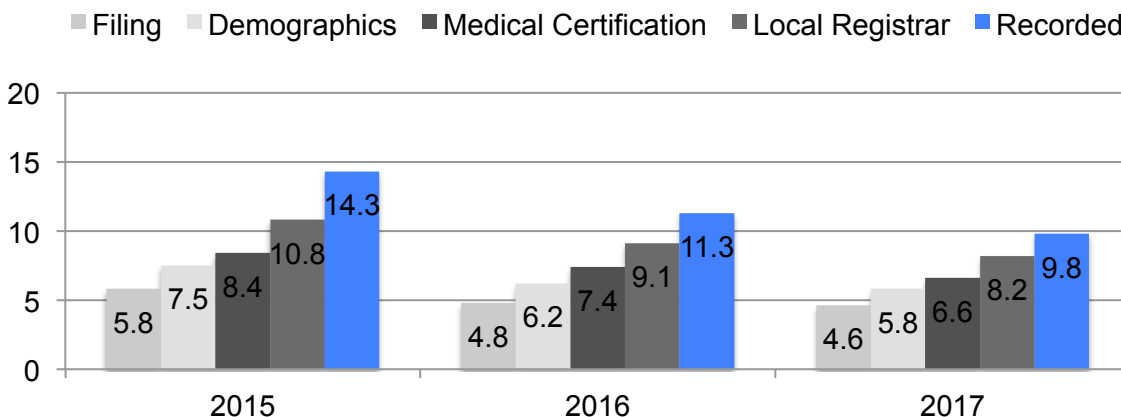
Medical Certification and Local Registration

In an effort to decrease the number of birth registration days and increase the number of referrals to the Agency's Maternal and Child Health Unit and Public Health Nursing programs, the Vital Statistics Services enlisted the support of the local county Public Health Nurses to act as local registrars for birth registration.

This effort has improved both filing and recording times for birth registration and has contributed to the increase in both home visitations and distribution of public services information through the Healthy Baby Programs Models; i.e., Best Beginnings and Nurse Family Partnership.

By participating as a local registrar, local public health nurses are able to screen all local births, where birth mothers note on hospital worksheets their interest or desire for public health nurses to contact them regarding programs and services available in their communities. This activity supports Wyoming Statute § 35-27-101 through W.S. § 35-27-104, Public Health Nurses Infant Home Visitation Services.

Figure 3: Birth Registration



Deaths

4,706 Wyoming residents died during calendar year 2016. Wyoming’s death rate is below the national rate and has remained relatively stable over the last five (5) years, as shown in Table 3, below. Vital Statistics Services provides death data to both state and federal partners and is the lead provider for cause of death data in Wyoming. Specific death data may be found in the death appendices.

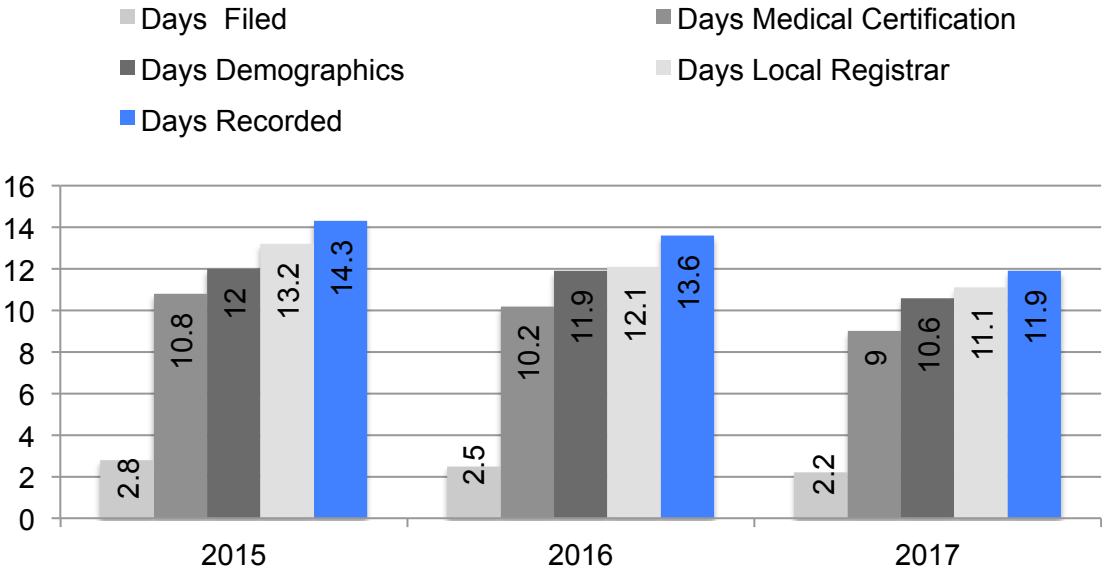
Table 3: Death Rate

Year	Wyoming Rate Per 100,000	U.S. Rate Per 100,000
2012	775	810.2
2013	767	821.5
2014	793	823.7
2015	809	828.0
2016	803.8	Not Available

Wyoming’s average filing time in days for fact of death is less than (2) days with the Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS). This is within the statutory requirement of three (3) days.

Beginning in July of 2015, VSS required all deaths be filed through the EDRS, with the goal to reduce the amount of paper used in the process, decrease the time for filing, and eliminate errors in transcription and lost certificates. In eliminating these variables and requiring physicians and local registrars to review and sign certificates online, the average recording fact of death time was reduced from 14 to 13 days the first year. The unit’s goal is to complete all certificates within ten (10) days for deaths, where the manner of death is deemed natural. To date, the number of days is 11 (See Figure 4 below).

Figure 4: Death Registration



Those events requiring additional reports or investigation, where the manner of death is other than natural, are targeted at twenty (20) days to allow for pathology, and thirty (30) days to allow for autopsy. The average number of days for recording deaths, where the manner of death is other than natural is 18 days. This filing period is down from 21 days the previous year. The rate as of this date is 14 days.

Medical Certification and Local Registration

Medical Certification continues to be an issue and the most time-consuming aspect of death registration. Though certification times have decreased, the average number of days from the time a death is filed to the primary health care provider certifying the file is six (6) days. Allowing primary health care providers to sign; i.e., Physicians, Advance Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) and Physician Assistant's (PAs), has aided the death registration process and has provided relief in smaller communities where APRNs and PAs are the only providers available to local residents and often needed to sign death certificates.

Marriage

In 2016, there were 4,145 new marriages in Wyoming. This number has remained consistent over the last five (5) plus years, as shown in Table 4, below. Currently, 2.3 % of Wyoming unions are to same sex couples.

Table 4: Marriages *

Year	Number
2012	4,507
2013	4,400
2014	4,476
2015	4,306
2016	4,145

Thirteen (13) counties use the state VSS system to record marriages. The remaining counties use a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) system (e.g., Tylertech), which was developed within the region for managing land deeds and title activities. Some of these counties are considering the VSS system for its lower cost and links to other vital records.

* Note that marriages are administered, managed, and reported to the state by county officials. For more information on marriages and divorces, please see the detailed tables in the appendix.

Divorce

There were 2,462 divorces in Wyoming in 2016. This number is fairly stable, seeing a decrease between 2011 and 2015, with a slight increase this past reporting period, as shown in Table 5, below.

Table 5: Divorces *

Year	Number
2012	2,564
2013	2,482
2014	2,443
2015	2,434
2016	2,462

* Note that divorces are administered, managed, and reported to the state by county officials. For more information on marriages and divorces, please see the detailed tables in the appendix.

Section 4. Appendices

In the attached appendix, please find the following information on the pages indicated:

- Historical tables pp. 4-8
- Birth tables pp. 9-25
- Death tables pp. 26-34
- Marriage tables pp. 35-36
- Divorce tables pp. 37-38
- Definitions and technical calculations pp. 39-42