

REPORT TO THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE
STATE OF HAWAII
2010

PURSUANT TO ACT 162, PART III, SECTION 34, SESSION LAWS OF HAWAII 2009,
H. B. 200, AUTOMATION OF MARRIAGE REGISTRATION SYSTEM,
REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO GIVE A REPORT ON THE
FUNDS APPROPRIATED TO AUTOMATE THE SYSTEM

PREPARED BY:
STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
OCTOBER 2009

The Office of Health Status Monitoring (OHSM) of the Hawaii State Department of Health is responsible for the administration of vital records of birth, marriage and death and the administration of vital statistics for the State of Hawaii. OHSM's mission is to facilitate the registration of vital records and to provide customers with accurate and timely certified copies of vital records.

About 30,000 marriages are performed in the State each year, two-thirds of which are non-resident marriages. The Department of Health brings in approximately \$1.8 million per year from marriage license fees, which represent a fraction of the multi-million dollar revenue stream that weddings, which is a vital segment of Hawaii's visitor and tourist industry, generate to the State's economy.

The current marriage registration system is largely a paper-based system that is cumbersome and outdated. Prior to November 2007, the marriage license agents used the old technology DOS-based program that had numerous incompatibility problems with current computer systems and equipment. With this technology, because the paper license physically moved from the couple to the marriage officiant, who then submitted it to OHSM, the registration of the marriage was not expeditious and the couple could not get their certified copies in a timely manner.

Because of the numerous problems with the DOS-based program and to facilitate the transition from a manual paper-based system to an electronic system, in November 2007, OHSM implemented an interim web-based marriage license program that was patterned after the DOS-based program. This interim web-based program allowed ease of use in entering information and editing capabilities; however, various challenges regularly occurred, such as skipped or missing license numbers. Although the majority of the marriage license agents are participating in the program, it was not designed to accommodate the online participation of the couple or the marriage officiant and, therefore, the paper license still needs to be manually submitted to OHSM for data-entering of the officiant information in the system. This continues to make the marriage registration process cumbersome and not as timely or accurate as when a comprehensive electronic system is implemented.

Because of the above inefficiencies, OHSM is re-engineering its marriage registration system to streamline and improve the efficiency, accuracy and timeliness of the marriage registration processes so that the prospective bride and groom can obtain their marriage license and certified copy of the marriage certificate quickly and easily.

The marriage process is complex, and the new Electronic Marriage Registration System (EMRS) will be incorporating system features to reflect as much as possible the processes done manually, with comprehensive edit checks and safeguards to ensure that marriages registered in the State of Hawaii meet all legal requirements as defined by State laws, rules and regulations. Additionally, the system needs to accommodate a variety of participants, including couples, marriage agents, marriage officiants, District Health personnel on the neighbor islands and OHSM personnel.

With the EMRS, the couple will be able to apply and pay for their marriage license via credit card online before coming to a registered marriage agent in Hawaii. All marriage agents are expected to participate in the EMRS; and if the marriage officiant is also online, the officiant or the couple will be able to print a temporary marriage certificate soon after the wedding ceremony.

OHSM is in the planning phase of the EMRS project and is moving toward achieving the following EMRS objectives:

- 1) To design, develop and implement a smoothly functioning Internet-based system that will allow authorized users to electronically transmit marriage information to DOH and to seamlessly tie in the automation of the issuance of the certified marriage certificate.
- 2) To establish and enhance public/private partnerships and collaborations with agencies involved in marriages in the State of Hawaii.

A critical aspect to ensure a successful EMRS project is the buy-in, support and acceptance of the EMRS by participants and prospective business partners. Therefore, much of the planning efforts have been targeted toward this end.

Significant progress has been achieved to date to obtain buy-in from the various EMRS participants.

- In January 2008, the OHSM EMRS project team was established and has been regularly meeting bi-weekly to plan for the design, development and implementation of the EMRS.
- Surveys were conducted statewide on couples, marriage agents and marriage officiants to assess the current marriage license and registration processes, identify issues and start detailing preliminary system requirements:
 - Survey of marriage agents: In April 2008, a telephone survey was conducted with marriage agents statewide.
 - Survey of religious organizations: In April and August 2009, collaborative meetings were held with three church organizations on Oahu to garner their support of the EMRS and solicit their help in disseminating information on the EMRS to their membership.
 - Survey of marriage officiants:
 - In July 2008, a mail-in survey was conducted with 13 marriage officiants, nine from the religious community and four judges to learn about their current process and needs for the EMRS.
 - From March to July 2009, 32 marriage officiants were surveyed to learn about their current process, determine their computer capabilities and assess their interest in the EMRS.
 - From May 2009 to date, meetings were held with 10 marriage officiants, eight of whom were the top performing officiants in 2008, to learn about their current process, orient them to the EMRS, and obtain their input for the EMRS. These officiants expressed their enthusiastic support for the EMRS.
 - Survey of couples: From July 2008 to September 2009, the marriage agents statewide handed out a survey to couples being issued a marriage license to learn about the process they go through to get married and their interest in the EMRS. Survey results show that out of 5,471 surveys received, 62% preferred entering information using a web-based system.

- Collaborative meetings with EMRS stakeholders:
 - In October 29, 2008, a meeting was held with Marsha Weinert, State Tourism Liaison, and Daniel Chun, Assistant, to apprise them of the EMRS planning activities and solicit their assistance in bringing together the three wedding associations on Oahu, Maui and Kauai (there is no wedding association on the Big Island).
 - On April 1, 2009, a meeting was held with Marsha Wienert, Daniel Chun and the wedding coordinators from the wedding associations on Maui and Kauai to apprise them of the EMRS and obtain their feedback.

Based on the project team's discussions at their bi-weekly meetings, the EMRS Business Plan and EMRS System Documentation were developed. In May 2009, OHSM selected the EMRS vendor, Hawaii Information Consortium (HIC), to design, construct and develop the EMRS. HIC was the vendor who helped develop the Department of Health's highly successful Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) and is now actively participating in the project team's bi-weekly EMRS meetings. Currently, the project team is reviewing HIC's initial screen layouts for the couple's application stage of the process.

Based on the above, significant inroads have been made toward achieving the EMRS objectives. The EMRS project is modeled after the successful EDRS project. The valuable experience gained from the EDRS project is being translated to the EMRS project, with improved system features and more efficient processing.