

INFORMATION SYSTEMS AUDIT  
 Vital Statistics Information Management System

Department of Public Health and Human Services

JANUARY 2014

13DP-02

REPORT SUMMARY

Vital records directly affect the lives and benefits of all present and former Montana residents. Failure to protect vital records information could affect federal and state services to Montana citizens. The audit team identified areas which could be strengthened to maximize the integrity of vital statistics data and records.

**Context**

The Vital Statistics Information Management System (VSIMS) is a web-based application used for managing vital records such as birth and death certificates. The system is operated by the Office of Vital Statistics (OVS) within the Department of Public Health and Human Services. There are approximately 2,000 users who access the system on a daily basis to enter new vital records, review existing information, and issue certified copies of certificates.

As described in §50-15-122, MCA, it is the policy of the state to protect the integrity of vital records and vital reports, to ensure their proper use, and to ensure the efficient and proper administration of the system of vital statistics. The audit focused on controls related to access including assignment, permissions, and monitoring; input validations and edits to ensure data integrity; and protection of data output.

**Results**

From the audit work conducted, we concluded OVS has incorporated controls within VSIMS; however, some procedures could be strengthened. The following is an overview of the areas that include recommendations for improvements:

- ◆ Six-month user review process should be updated to include all users.
- ◆ Creation and assignment of application roles – should be reviewed to ensure only required access is granted.
- ◆ User account passwords – need to ensure users reset passwords regularly.
- ◆ User monitoring – should establish a process for ongoing review of users with administrative rights.
- ◆ Release of death record data – protocol needs to be consistent with policy.
- ◆ Use of automation – should analyze processes and use automation where possible to increase efficiencies.

Recommendation Concurrence	
Concur	6
Partially Concur	0
Do Not Concur	0
<b>Source: Agency audit response included in final report.</b>	