



## Decree 1171 of 1997

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DECREE 1171 OF 1997

(April 28)

Regulating Articles 50 and 51 of Law 23 of 1981.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA,

In exercise of the powers conferred upon him by paragraph 11 of Article 189 of the Political Constitution,

DECREES:

CHAPTER I GENERAL

PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 1. *Scope of application.* This decree applies to all duly qualified medical professionals who are registered or hold a professional license issued by the Ministry of Health and who practice their profession within the national territory, as well as to all those who are performing compulsory social service.

The provisions of this decree also oblige Regional Health Directorates, Health Service Providers, and other public, mixed, and private health entities, as well as patients, nursing assistants, and health promoters who are registered with this Ministry or enrolled and trained by Regional, District, and Local Health Directorates with the appropriate certifications, especially with regard to the provision of statistical information and the handling of the forms for the issuance of Live Birth and Death Certificates adopted by the Ministry of Health.

CHAPTER II

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE

ARTICLE 2. The Medical Certificate shall be issued by a Medical Professional, with a professional license or registration from the Ministry of Health, or by a physician who is performing Compulsory Social Service, in accordance with the provisions of Article 50 of Law 23 of 1981.

PARAGRAPH. The text of the Medical Certificate shall be clear, precise, and strictly truthful. Irregular issuance shall entail civil, criminal, and ethical liability for the physician who issues it, in accordance with the regulations in force on the matter.

ARTICLE 3. In places where there are no medical professionals or those performing compulsory social service, the Medical Certificate may be completed and signed by health personnel authorized in this decree, for the purpose of obtaining statistical information.

ARTICLE 4. The Medical Certificate relating to health status, treatment, or medical procedure must contain at least the following general information:

- a) Place and date of issue;
- b) Person or entity to whom it is addressed;
- c) Patient's health status, prescribed treatment, or medical procedure;
- d) Patient's name and identification;

- e) Purpose and aims of the certificate;
- f) Name of the medical professional issuing the certificate;
- g) Professional license number and registration number;
- h) Signature of the issuing professional.

ARTICLE 5. The Medical Birth Certificate shall be issued to certify the fact that the individual was born alive and shall consist of three parts:

- a) The first part is intended to record data specific to the birth, such as: surnames and first names of the live-born individual, sex, weight, height, blood type, weeks of gestation, date of birth, time of birth, place and area of birth, place of delivery, institution where the birth took place, type of delivery, multiple births, and names and identification numbers of the health personnel who provided care.
- b) A second part is for recording data on the parents of the live-born individual, such as: first and last names, identification documents, age, marital status, educational level of each, place and area of habitual residence of the mother, date of birth of the previous live-born child, and number of live-born children;
- c) A third part is used to record the details of the person issuing the Medical Birth Certificate, such as: names and surnames, identification document, professional card number and medical registration, place and date of issue, and signature of the issuer.

ARTICLE 6. The Medical Death Certificate shall be issued to certify the death of any individual born alive or stillborn, as applicable, and shall contain at least the following sections:

- a) A first section for recording general information about the death, such as: Type of death, date, time, place, area, and location of death; general information about the deceased, such as first and last names, sex, identification document, date of birth, age, educational level, marital status, area and usual place of residence of the deceased, and cause of death. It shall also include the name, address, telephone number, professional license or registration number, and signature of the health professional issuing the certificate.
- b) A second part is intended to record data on fetal deaths, or deaths of children under one year of age, regardless of gestation time; thus: Occurrence of death in relation to childbirth; type of delivery, type of pregnancy, gestation time, birth weight, and mother's data: first and last names, address, age, number of children, marital status, and educational level;
- c) A third section is dedicated to recording data specific to the death of women, such as: pregnancy status at the time of death, pregnancy status in the last six weeks, or in the last twelve months prior to death;
- d) A quarter is used to record data related to violent deaths: suicides, homicides, traffic accidents, and other accidents. If the cause of death has not been determined and the case is referred to the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences for a ruling, the circumstances, location, and address where the event occurred must also be indicated.
- e) A fifth section is for recording the general causes of all deaths, such as: the direct cause, antecedents, and other important pathological conditions; the technical methods or other means by which the cause of death was determined; and whether technical assistance was received during the process prior to death.

ARTICLE 7. The forms for certificates of live births and deaths may be completed and signed by the following health personnel:

- a) Medical professionals who are duly qualified, have a valid medical license or professional card from the Ministry of Health, or are performing compulsory social service;
- b) When there is no medical professional or person performing compulsory social service in the area, the forms may be completed by duly qualified nurses who are registered or have a professional card from the Ministry of Health;
- c) In areas that are difficult to access, where there are no medical professionals, no one performing compulsory social service, and no nursing professionals as a permanent health resource, the forms may be completed by nursing assistants who are registered with the Regional Health Directorates or, failing that, by health promoters who are duly trained and registered with said Health Directorates and have obtained the relevant certifications.

ARTICLE 8. This decree shall take effect on the date of its publication and repeals any provisions that contradict it.

PUBLISH AND COMPLY.

Issued in Santa Fe de Bogotá, D.C., on the 28th day of April 1997.

ERNESTO SAMPER PIZANO

THE MINISTER OF

HEALTH,

MARÍA TERESA FORERO DE SAADE.

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