Death Certificate Tips

DO:
- Enter the underlying disease that caused death
- Only list things that actually contributed to the death
- Pay attention to “Due to” between lines in Box 36 Part I to form a logical sequence (A due to B due to C due to D)
- Enter the Manner of Death (Box 39)

DO NOT:
- List nonspecific mechanisms like “shock”, “sepsis”, “cardiac arrest”, “respiratory failure”. Instead list the actual disease that caused such a mechanism.
- List random stuff in Box 36 Part I (it must form a logical sequence)
- Certify deaths from trauma (e.g. hip fractures) or toxicity (e.g. drug overdose) – call the Medical Examiner
- List ESRD or CHF without listing the disease that caused the organ to fail
- Use the term Intracranial hemorrhage. Rather, specify the type and etiology of the hemorrhage

Examples

a) Atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease

- a) End Stage Renal Disease
  Due To
b) Diabetic nephropathy

a) Cardiac tamponade
  Due To
b) Hemopericardium
  Due to
c) Ruptured myocardial infarction

Red Flags:
Stop to consider NON-Natural causes for any of the following:
- Failure to thrive
- Sepsis
- Seizures
- Cerebral Palsy
- -plegia of any kind
- Brain/Intracranial bleeds
- Aspiration pneumonia
- Malnutrition
- Dehydration
Include the cause of any of these, as appropriate.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First event</th>
<th>Last event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Due to&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Only five options: Natural, Accident, Homicide, Suicide, or Indeterminate. Clinicians may only certify Natural deaths.