

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date

5/28/2025

2. Department

California Department of Public Health

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

Vital Records and Statistics Division

4. CEA Position Title

Deputy Director, Vital Records and Statistics Division

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose. (2-3 sentences)

The Deputy Director (DD) for the Vital Records and Statistics Division (VRSD) provides leadership, guidance, overarching strategic direction, and management for the VRSD which consists of four branches: the Vital Records Issuance Branch (VRIB), Vital Records Registration Branch (VRRB), Operations Branch (OB), and Research and Analytics Branch (RAB). The DD for VRSD also serves as the State Registrar, as delegated by the Director of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). The State Registrar is legally charged with statewide responsibility for implementing and maintaining a uniform system for registration and a permanent central registry for all birth, fetal death, marriage, and death records. The DD is responsible for supporting department-wide and statewide strategies to ensure equitable, accurate, and timely access to vital records and the generation of equitable, accurate, and timely vital statistics that forms the epidemiological basis of public health data, programs, and policy.

6. Reports to: (Class Title/Level)

Assistant Public Health Officer/Exempt

7. Relationship with Department Director (Select one)

- ☒ Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.
- ☐ Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(Explain):

Responsibilities include advising the CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer, California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS/Agency) Secretary, and the Governor's Office (GO) on policy and legislative matters pertaining to vital records and statistics and serving as the State Registrar as delegated by the CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer. This involves frequent contact with the Director and Executive management.

8. Organizational Level (Select one)

- ☐ 1st ☒ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐ 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.

The DD, CEA supports the CDPH's mission and strategic plan by providing leadership, guidance, overarching strategic direction, and management for the VRSD which consists of over 200 staff across four branches and a budget of approximately \$78 million. The CEA provides leadership and guidance to the four branches in the Division and develops a shared vision for: operational excellence; strategic planning; policy development and implementation; evaluation and continuous improvement; and programmatic development, improvement, and execution to serve Californians and our partners.

The DD develops and implements Division and Department-wide strategies to ensure equitable, accurate, and timely access to vital records (i.e., birth, death, fetal death/still birth, marriage, and divorce records) and a generation of equitable, accurate, and timely vital statistics that forms the epidemiological basis of public health data, program, and policy. The CEA is charged with ensuring proper collection, processing, maintenance, and storage of California's vital records data as well as ensuring vital records data quality and integrity when working to synthesize data to provide vital statistics within and outside the Department. The VRSD DD monitors trends in vital records and statistics to inform Division and Departmental policy and programs. The CEA establishes expectations for the highest level of customer service to government partners and the public for providing services relating to vital records registration, amendment, and issuance. When necessary, the DD convenes and coordinates advisory bodies of subject matter experts to ensure the VRSD's current policies, procedures, and strategic direction reflect best practices. The CEA oversees special projects within vital records that involve highly sensitive subject matter, including managing the mandatory security features and fraud prevention efforts within California vital records, and automating and improving processes and policies related to vital records indexing and storage. The DD establishes and maintains partnerships with federal partners in identity management and fraud prevention, such as the United States Passport Agency, Social Security Administration (SSA), and Department of Homeland Security.

The VRSD DD Serves as the State Registrar as delegated by the CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer. This position ensures that CDPH adheres to the responsibilities of the State Registrar according to Part 1 of Division 102 of the California Health and Safety Code – Vital Records. The CEA oversees the implementation and maintenance of an equitable and uniform system for registration and permanent central registry for vital records. The DD administers the vital records statutes; supervises the State's 61 Local Registration Districts (LRDs) to ensure uniform compliance with the vital records statutes; oversees the preparation and issuance of all county letters of instruction, policies, and guidelines as required to maintain statewide uniformity; advises and instructs local registrars through consultation, regional workshops, annual site visits, and conferences; maintains cooperative working relationships with organizations interested in vital records data, such as the California Conference of Local Health Officers, California Coroners Association, California Association of Clerks and Election Officials, County Records' Association of California, California Funeral Directors Association, SSA, Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and National Center for Health Statistics.

The VRSD DD is responsible for coordinating and attending various work groups and committees relating to vital records and their management, including but not limited to quarterly Vision meetings with County Recorders, federal work group meetings with the National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems, federal Vital Records Accreditation Work group meetings, and U.S. Standard Certificate meetings. The CEA presents information related to vital records and their management to providers, stakeholders, and advocates related to policy development and implementation, and represents CDPH at local, state, national, and international forums dealing with vital records and statistics.

The CEA collaborates with Centers, Divisions, and Offices (C/D/Os) across the Department to ensure coordinated and complementary efforts to obtain and maintain equitable, accurate, and timely access to vital records. This position leads collaboration with other C/D/Os to ensure the generation of equitable, accurate, and timely vital statistics in support of C/D/O program and policy goals. The VRSD DD provides professional review of data, studies, educational materials, and reports generated by the VRSD to ensure compliance with CDPH policies, existing law, public health requirements and overall quality control requirements and conducting special projects that are highly sensitive or subject to controversy. Responsibilities include representing the Department before the Legislature, the media, and public on issues relevant to the VRSD, and advising the CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer, California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS/Agency) Secretary, and the Governor's Office (GO) on policy and legislative matters pertaining to vital records and statistics. The CEA participates on CDPH senior leadership teams and assists with development and implementation of department-wide strategic priorities and initiatives.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- ☒ Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- ☐ Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- ☐ Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description: CDPH is dedicated to advancing the health and well-being of California's diverse people and communities. The VRSD's role in supporting this mission is to: improve the quality and availability of vital records and statistics information and services. The DD is responsible for overseeing department-wide and statewide strategies to ensure equitable, accurate, and timely access to vital records and the generation of equitable, accurate, and timely vital statistics that forms the epidemiological basis of public health data, program, and policy.

The Director of the CDPH is legally mandated to serve as the State Registrar, a duty that is delegated to the DD for VRSD. The State Registrar is legally charged with statewide responsibility for implementing and maintaining a uniform system for registration and a permanent central registry for all birth, fetal death, and death records (approximately 1 million events are registered annually) which members of the public rely on to establish identity and obtain critical services like health insurance, education, housing, loans, driving privileges, etc. The vital statistics data is provided by the VRSD to public health partners (including CDPH programs, state departments, federal agencies, local agencies, and private partners) for birth and death trends which are critical to public health's understanding of health risks and key health concerns. The DD ensures the quality and availability of this essential public health resource for data-driven decision making, and conducts continuous quality improvement efforts for improved data quality, data delivery, analytics capacity, and overall customer service.

More specifically, the VRSD is responsible for storing, curating, analyzing, and reporting vital statistics derived from registering and processing vital record events. The Division extracts data from the registered vital records and conducts analysis for actionable information, including: maternal and infant outcomes, demographic and geographic population health information, and tracking emerging causes of death. This population health data is used to make state-wide and local health jurisdiction decisions for resource allocations, priority research topics, and areas for priority quality improvement across the State.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

The responsibilities of the DD for the Center for Health Statistics and Informatics (CHSI) is currently allocated to an exempt position, appointed under the Governor's authority. CDPH is proposing a reorganization that includes renaming CHSI to the VRSD. This reorganization will also transition the Data Strategy and Governance Division (DSGD) out of CHSI. The DSGD will be renamed to the Office of Data Strategy and will report directly to the Assistant Public Health Officer to elevate its work beyond the Center level. This restructuring reflects the growing scope and importance of data strategy and governance, currently managed by a vacant Chief Data Officer (CDO) position, CEA A. The increasingly distinct roles of CHSI's two major functions—1) oversight of vital records and statistics, and 2) oversight of data strategy and governance—necessitate separating these responsibilities and reorganizing the Center. Separating vital records and statistics into VRSD, under this proposed CEA B position, allows for greater focus, quality control, and improvement in registering, storing, curating, analyzing, and reporting vital statistics.

Currently, the DD of CHSI must divide their attention between overseeing Vital Records and Statistics and leading the planning, development, and implementation of a comprehensive data strategy and governance approach for the Department. In recent years, the role of the CDO (reporting to the DD of CHSI) and its supporting team has expanded significantly due to increased state and national focus on modernizing public health data systems and practices. As this role has evolved into a cross-departmental function demanding more time and strategic oversight, it is essential to elevate this work to the Directorate level. This shift ensures that both data strategy and vital records/statistics receive the dedicated focus necessary for effective execution and impact.

The skill set required to effectively oversee a CDO differs significantly from that needed to manage the VRSD. Elevating the CDO role to report directly to a Directorate member allows for more focused and successful alignment and distinct expertise in each area of work. A CDO brings deep expertise in informatics, data science, analytics, IT systems, data strategy, and data governance at an enterprise level—skills that often diverge from those suited for overseeing Vital Records and Statistics. The DD of VRSD requires a background in administrative and operational management, with a strong focus on legal mandates, process improvement, customer service, and program and policy decisions related to vital records registration, maintenance, and analysis, as well as oversight of Local Registration Districts. The combined role of the DD of CHSI, overseeing both vital records/statistics and the CDO's work in data strategy and governance has not proved practical or viable given the disparate expertise and focus required for these critical functions. The highly technical expertise required for a CDO justifies elevating that position to report to the Directorate level and removing it from CHSI. As a result, the VRSD will be appropriately as a Division. To implement this proposed change, the CDPH will establish this CEA B position to serve as the DD, VRSD.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

The CEA DD, VRSD is the principle policy maker for the following:

1) Part 1 of Division 102 of the California Health and Safety Code (HSC) – Vital Records. The DD of the VRSD is responsible for maintaining the strict statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements for protecting vital records data and curating that data into vital statistics. This includes: policy decisions that ensure VRSD complies with federal reporting requirements to the CDC, SSA, and other federal partners (IMPACT: appropriate identity protection to Californians seeking vital records; appropriate linkages to federal benefits when applicable); policy decisions that ensure VRSD complies with application of the Data De-identification Guidelines, Minimum Necessary Policy, and other administrative requirements for reporting vital statistics in California (IMPACT: appropriate identity protection to Californians seeking vital records); and setting policy for annual reports that include vital statistics, such as the County Health Status Profiles and Death Data Trend Summaries (IMPACT: these decisions dictate which health issues are highlighted and elevated for public health officials, policy makers, and the public).

2) Part 1 of Division 102 of the California Health and Safety Code (HSC) – Vital Records. The DD of VRSD is the State Registrar, as delegated by the CDPH Director. This position is responsible for a multitude of policy decisions and standards for the State's 61 local registration districts (LRDs) to ensure the maintenance of an equitable and uniform system for registration and permanent central registry for vital records (i.e., birth, death, fetal death/still birth, marriage, and divorce records). (IMPACT: policy decisions in this area could make it disproportionately harder for some Californians to obtain vital records which could inhibit their ability to establish and obtain health insurance, employment, driver's license, passport, etc.)

3) California Health and Safety Code, Division 1, Part 1.85, Section 443-443.22. The DD of VRSD will be responsible for the Department's role in implementing the End of Life Act (EOLA). EOLA enables Californian adults diagnosed with a terminal illness, who meet certain criteria, to request aid-in-dying drugs from their physician. Every year CDPH is mandated to produce an annual report sharing information submitted by physicians who take part in EOLA and the patients they serve with EOLA. This entails making highly sensitive and political decisions, in collaboration with CalHHS/Agency and the GO about which data fields to include in the annual EOLA report which must take into account privacy as well as how such data, and its inherent limitations, may support or threaten the Act which is highly supported and highly contested among different advocates. (IMPACT: Californians have an accurate understanding of how aid-in-dying is being used in California and the report influences the continued existence of the option to pursue aid-in-dying for those with terminal illness).

4) California Government Code 8550 et seq. The DD of VRSD is responsible for ensuring CDPH complies with Proclamations of a State of Emergency by overseeing the Department's efforts to adequately staff Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) when there are local emergencies. The State of California's Emergency Plan designates responsibility to CDPH for supporting these DRCs to replace vital birth, death, and marriage records that are lost or inaccessible due to such disasters. This includes the development of departmental policies and procedures, in collaboration with the Human Resources Division, for mandating deployment of CDPH staff given the rising frequency of emergencies and disasters in the setting of climate change. (IMPACT: Californians have adequate access to services that allow them to recover vital records like birth and marriage certificates in the event of disasters that might destroy such records or leave them inaccessible. Lack of access to replacement vital records would inhibit Californians' access to proof of citizenship and obtaining services such as health and life insurance, a driver's license, education, etc.).

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?

The DD of the VRSD has broad authority to make all major decisions regarding the implementation of policy priorities, strategies, budget and programs of the VRSD. The proposed CEA will directly report to the Assistant Public Health Officer and will exercise broad, independent judgment and decision-making authority with respect to policy development and implementation, with a consequence of error that effects not only CDPH employees and managers, but also local health jurisdictions (LHJs), federal agencies, local registrars, and other state departments. The DD has ultimate oversight, responsibility, and decision-making authority for the four Branches of the VRSD which includes: the VRRB, VRIB, RAB, and OB. This includes broad decision-making authority over programs and policy related to the VRSD to ensure equitable, accurate, and timely access to vital records and the generation of equitable, accurate, and timely vital statistics that forms the epidemiological basis of public health data, program, and policy. The DD has oversight, responsibility, and decision-making authority over VRRB, VRIB, and RAB to: ensure the proper collection, processing, maintenance, and storage of California's vital records data; ensure vital records data quality and integrity when working to synthesize data to provide vital statistics within and outside the Department; and inform Division and Departmental policy and programs based on trends in vital records and statistics. This CEA B will take on the delegated role of State Registrar and is responsible for convening, negotiating, fostering, and promoting collaborative partnerships with federal, state, and local governmental entities, including the CalHHS/Agency, the GO, the Legislature, local registrars, LHJs, community-based organizations, health care communities, and other stakeholders to achieve shared goals of advancing health equity for Californians. Operationally, the DD has ultimate decision-making authority over all the operations of the VRSD which includes issues pertaining to personnel, procurements, contracts, legislative analysis, media requests, regulatory changes, and budget changes. The decisions made by the proposed CEA B will have a substantial impact on CDPH internally and on external stakeholders and the California population at large. The DD will confer with other Deputy Directors as well as the Assistant Health Officer and Directorate on the most complex decisions that involve implications and potential consequences that affect other CDPH programs or partners outside of CDPH.

14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?

The DD of the VRSD is tasked with developing and implementing new policy as well as interpreting, revising, and implementing existing policy to ensure the proper collection, processing, maintenance, and storage of California's vital records data. Examples of interpreting and implementing existing policy: Making policy decisions that ensure VRSD complies with federal requirements set forth by the CDC, SSA, and other federal partners as well as policy decisions that ensure VRSD complies with CalHHS/Agency Data De-identification Guidelines, Minimum Necessary Policy, and other administrative requirements for reporting vital statistics in California. Examples of developing and implementing new policy: Developing new policies related to standards for vital record data collection, storage, and sharing that will ensure vital records data quality and integrity in the development of vital statistics within and outside the Department.