



Edward D. Simmer, MD, MPH, DFAPA
Director

September 28, 2021

The Honorable Wm. Weston J. Newton
Chairman, House Legislative Oversight Committee
Post Office Box 11867
Columbia, SC 29211

Dear Chairman Newton:

On June 30, 2021 the ad hoc committee recommended increased interagency collaboration with the State Election Commission to assist with removing deceased voters from the state's active voter roll. As requested in your letter dated August 31, I am pleased to provide an update on implementation of this recommendation by the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).

DHEC has been working with the State Election Commission to develop the capability to identify additional deceased voters for removal from the rolls. Pursuant to Section 7-3-40 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, DHEC's Division of Vital Statistics provides the State Election Commission a monthly report of all persons of voting age who have died within the state since the previous report; however, this report does not currently include information about out-of-state deaths of South Carolina residents. On a national level, existing systems cannot identify every out-of-state death; however, DHEC does have access to some of this information through the State and Territorial Exchange of Vital Events (STEVE) system operated by the National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS). DHEC has been working with the State Election Commission to draft a data sharing agreement that will allow DHEC to provide the State Election Commission with information from STEVE about deaths of South Carolina voters that have occurred outside the state. Files have already been prepared for transmission once the final agreement is approved and executed by both agencies, and additional files will be furnished in the future in accordance with the data sharing agreement.

I appreciate the efforts of the ad hoc committee and staff to understand the processes and procedures underlying the provision of information about deaths and its thoughtful consideration reflected within its recommendations. Should you or the committee have any questions regarding implementation of its recommendation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Edward D. Simmer