



## Press release

DR. MARIO MARAZZI-SANTIAGO  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### ***Puerto Rico Demographic Register Complies with Order to Publish Mortality Data***

*The action paves the way for greater transparency that  
saves lives after future hurricanes in Puerto Rico*

**San Juan, PR, August 30, 2018** – The Puerto Rico Institute of Statistics (PRIS) announced today that the Demographic Registry has begun to comply with Resolution No. 2018-03 of the PRIS Board of Directors with the purpose of publishing a dataset containing preliminary information on registered deaths, which will be updated weekly on the open data platform managed by PRIS.

The PRIS Board of Directors had ordered this disclosure as a "measure of transparency", following the concerns that were raised last year regarding the deaths that occurred after the passing of Hurricanes Irma and María over Puerto Rico.

The published dataset contains information for each registered death, occurring from January 1, 2017 to the most recent week. It includes information on the causes of death, the month of death, place of residence, place of birth, type of death, sex, marital status, age, level of education, occupation, industry, veteran status, among others.

It can be downloaded from the new PRIS open data platform, available here: <https://datos.estadisticas.pr/dataset/defunciones-registradas-hasta-la-semana-pasada>. The platform also allows users to preview the data and to develop applications that connect to the dataset automatically by using an Application Programming Interface (API).

Although the Resolution of the PRIS Board mandates that this dataset be updated daily, the Department of Health and PRIS agreed to update the dataset on a weekly basis, as long as there is no declaration of emergency. If an emergency is declared in the future, the Demographic Registry will be updating the data on a daily basis, in order to facilitate the analysis of this data that can save lives. In fact, this protocol should be included in the next Emergency Plan of the Department of Health.

"Now, more than ever, the importance of the accessibility of statistical data to determine trends, during specific moments or phenomena, which result in more assertive responses to emergencies, has become evident. The certainty and transparency of this type of information could make the difference between life and death. Both the Department of Health and the administration of Governor Ricardo Rosselló have always promoted free access to information, more so in times when we seek to perfect each aspect of our contingency plans for times of emergencies. This initiative, which links the Puerto Rico Institute of Statistics and the Demographic Registry, points in that direction. We are pleased it has materialized and that there have been steps taken in the

process of data collection, for the benefit of Puerto Rican citizens”, said the Secretary of Health, Dr. Rafael Rodríguez Mercado.

The executive director of the PRIS, Dr. Mario Marazzi-Santiago, expressed the following: "Mortality statistics from the Department of Health take a long time to prepare and publish. The newly published data help to perceive mortality in the short-run, without the extensive protocol required by official statistics. In this way, we demonstrate the commitment of our Government. with transparency, and we are also better prepared to respond more quickly to the mortality that could occur after the next hurricane. The data will be available even if there is no regular electric power service in Puerto Rico. This disclosure literally saves lives. It is the least we can do to recognize and honor the memory of the thousands of people who died on account of Hurricane Maria”.

The announcement opens the way for the closing of a lawsuit filed by PRIS in May of this year to compel the Department of Health to provide this information on a recurring basis in order to comply with Resolution No. 2018-03 of the PRIS Board of Directors. In accordance with its Organic Law, PRIS has the authority to demand and emit subpoenas from any government agency the information or data it deems necessary for statistical purposes.

PRIS is an autonomous government entity charged with coordinating the government's statistical production service to ensure that the data collection and statistical systems on which public policies are based are comprehensive, reliable, timely and universally accessible. PRIS has in its inventory, accessible through [www.statistics.pr](http://www.statistics.pr), about 300 statistical products. In addition, it is custodian and provides access to over 100 datasets through [www.data.pr.gov](http://www.data.pr.gov) and over 40 tables and more than 6 thousand indicators through: [www.indicators.pr](http://www.indicators.pr).

In addition, as the State Data Center (SDC) lead entity in Puerto Rico, PRIS manages the SDC website, which contains the main statistical reports and publications of the U.S. Census Bureau on Puerto Rico, including those that are most requested, such as annual population estimates, the Puerto Rico Community Survey, and the official statistics of the decennial Census of Population and Housing of Puerto Rico, among others. The SDC website of Puerto Rico can be accessed through: <https://censo.estadisticas.pr/>. For more information you can visit our website: [www.statistics.pr](http://www.statistics.pr). In addition, you can follow us on social media in Facebook (estadisticas.pr), Twitter (@EstadisticasPR) and LinkedIn (Instituto de Estadísticas de Puerto Rico).

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