



Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Vital Records Electronic Registration System (ERS)
Birth Defect Registry Training Manual
Revised July 2024



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Overview

The Nebraska Vital Records Electronic Registration System is home to far more than just birth defect records – it hosts birth records, death records, and much more. Depending on your role, you may even have access to these other records. For the purposes of this training, however, we will be focusing on the two key reportable birth defect data categories: **birth defect cases** and **defect items**.

Each child born to a mother who is a Nebraska resident and is subsequently diagnosed with a birth defect (or multiple defects) will have a **birth defect case** created in the vital record system. Each birth should have only one birth defect case connected to it, as this case will then house every individual diagnosed birth defect - known as a **defect item** in the vital record system - the child is affected by.

Proper birth defect reporting in the vital record system generally boils down to locating a birth defect case for a given child or creating one if one cannot be located, and then creating the necessary birth defect items within the correct birth defect case; as such, the first sections of this manual will cover these paramount tasks in detail, with additional related functionality and tips regarding birth defects in the vital record system following after.

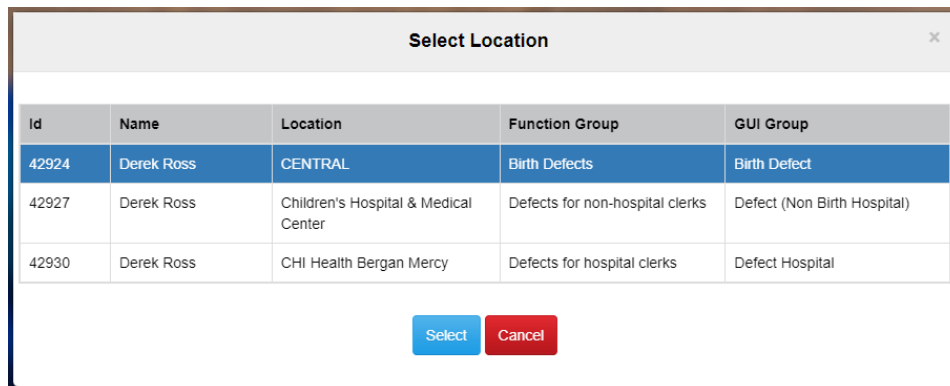
Logging into the Nebraska E-Vital Record System

1. Navigate to the login page by pasting the following URL in your browser of choice (Chrome is generally the browser of choice to ensure full functionality within the system): <https://vrers-dhhs.ne.gov/websvcvrers>



The screenshot shows the login interface for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Vital Records Electronic Registration System. It features a header with the department name and system title. Below this, there are two input fields: 'Username:' with the placeholder 'Enter your username' and 'Password:' with the placeholder 'Enter your password'. A blue 'Login' button is positioned below the password field, and a 'Reset password' link is located at the bottom center of the form area.

2. Enter your assigned username and chosen password in the corresponding fields, then click the **Login** button. If you have forgotten your password, you can reset it by clicking the *Reset password* link at the bottom of the page.
3. If you are assigned to multiple locations or have multiple roles within your facility, select the appropriate login option when prompted to “Select Location” and click the blue **Select** button to enter VRERS.



The screenshot displays a 'Select Location' dialog box with a close button (X) in the top right corner. It contains a table with the following data:

| Id | Name | Location | Function Group | GUI Group |
|-------|------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 42924 | Derek Ross | CENTRAL | Birth Defects | Birth Defect |
| 42927 | Derek Ross | Children's Hospital & Medical Center | Defects for non-hospital clerks | Defect (Non Birth Hospital) |
| 42930 | Derek Ross | CHI Health Bergan Mercy | Defects for hospital clerks | Defect Hospital |

At the bottom of the dialog box, there are two buttons: a blue 'Select' button and a red 'Cancel' button.

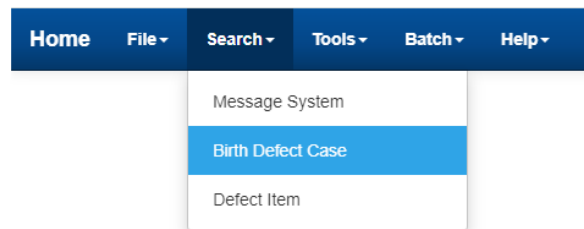
4. You will arrive at the vital records dashboard, from which you will navigate to all other pages described in this manual.



Searching for a Defect Case

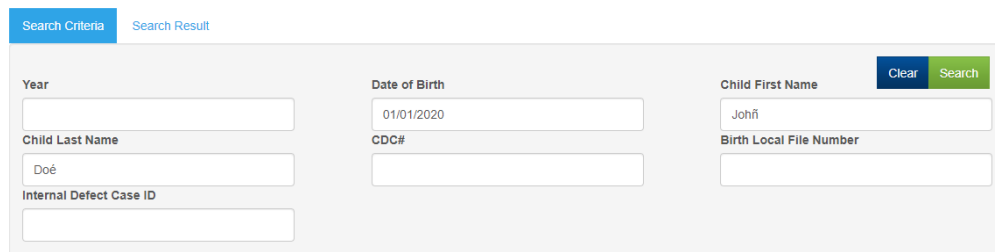
When utilizing the vital record system to report a birth defect, it is important to note that another facility (or even your own facility) may have previously identified and reported birth defects for this child and created a birth defect case in the system. As a birth defect case must exist before birth defect items can be reported, a birth defect case associated with the birth you are reporting defects for must be located or created.

1. From the dashboard, click the **Search** tab in the navigation bar at the top lefthand corner of the screen; this will cause a drop-down menu to appear below the tab. From the drop-down menu, select **Birth Defect Case**.

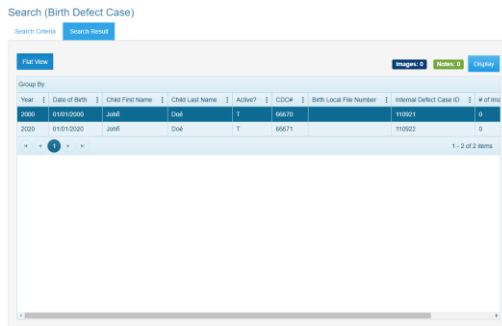


2. You will land on the *Search (Birth Defect Case)* page. Enter the necessary information to find the child you are reporting birth defects for.
 - a. It is best to enter as much information as possible (date of birth, first name, last name) to ensure you locate the correct record, but in some situations you may be able to locate the correct record by entering less information (i.e. the child has a very unique first name that no other child is likely to have).
 - b. Dates must be entered in the following format, separated by forward slashes as shown: **MM/DD/YYYY**
 - c. Be sure to enter names exactly, including all special characters, symbols, etc.

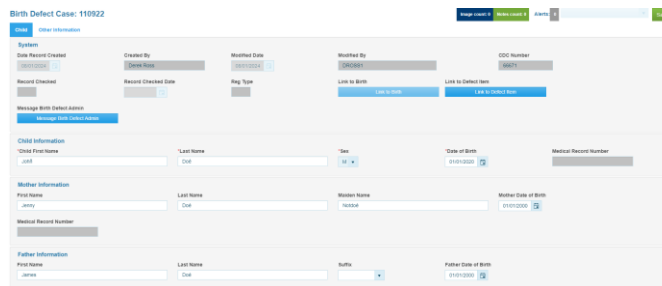
Search (Birth Defect Case)

A screenshot of a web form titled 'Search (Birth Defect Case)'. The form has two tabs: 'Search Criteria' (active) and 'Search Result'. The form contains several input fields: 'Year', 'Date of Birth' (with the value '01/01/2020'), 'Child First Name' (with the value 'John'), 'Child Last Name' (with the value 'Doe'), 'CDC#' (empty), 'Internal Defect Case ID' (empty), and 'Birth Local File Number' (empty). There are 'Clear' and 'Search' buttons in the top right corner of the form area.

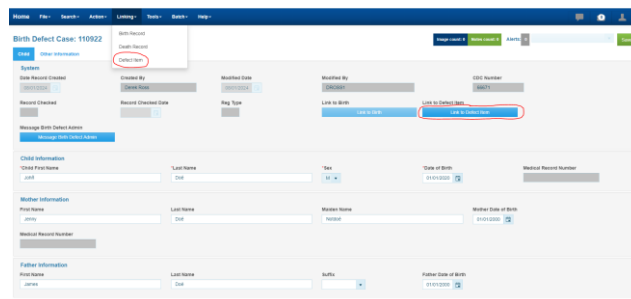
3. A table will appear in the **Search Result** tab of the *Search (Birth Defect Case)* page. If multiple birth defect cases match the search criteria, you will have to identify and select the correct row for the case you are reporting for; after selecting the correct row, click the **Display** button.
 - a. If no options appear in the table, you will either need to return to the **Search Criteria** tab, modify the fields, and try the search again or – in the case that you are completely unable to locate a birth defect case for the child – create a new case (per instructions in the next section, **Adding a Birth Defect Case**).



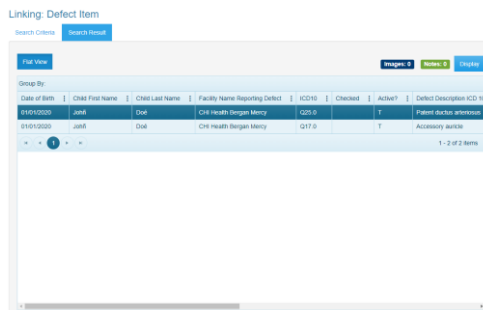
4. The *Birth Defect Case* page will open in a new tab.



5. To identify which birth defect items have already been reported for this child, you can either click the **Linking** tab at the top of the page and select **Defect Item** from the drop-down menu that appears, or you can simply click the **Link to Defect Item** button.



6. The *Linking: Defect Item* page will open in a new tab. Similar to the *Search: Birth Defect Case* page, a table of results for all applicable defect items will populate. If the defect item you intend to enter is not visible and you are certain your facility has not previously entered it, continue to add those defect items; otherwise, if all necessary items have been entered, no further action is necessary for this case.

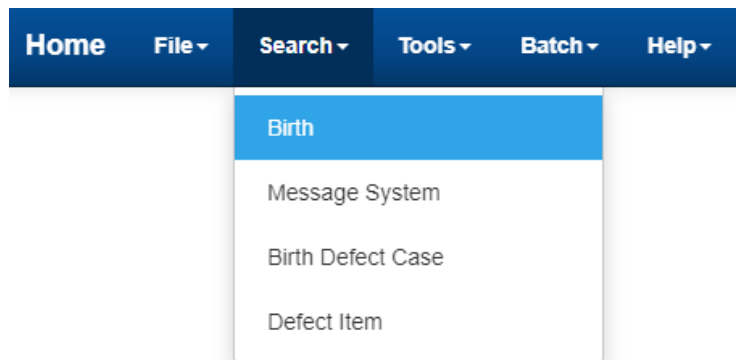


Adding a Birth Defect Case (Unable to Locate an Existing Defect Case)

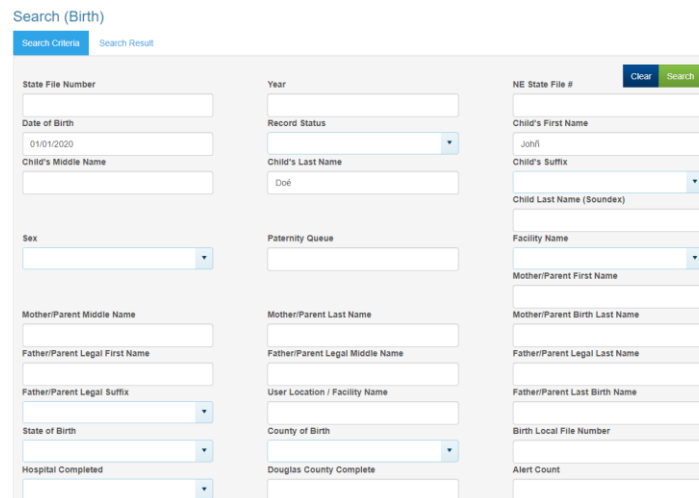
When a birth defect case cannot be located, a new case must be created in order for individual defect items to be reported. This process is slightly different between birthing facilities (who can directly link a new case to a birth record) and non-birthing facilities (who must create a case for later connection to the birth record). After identifying which type of facility you are reporting for, follow one of the following processes as applicable:

Birthing Facilities

1. From the dashboard, click the **Search** tab in the navigation bar at the top lefthand corner of the screen; this will cause a drop-down menu to appear below the tab. From the drop-down menu, select **Birth**.

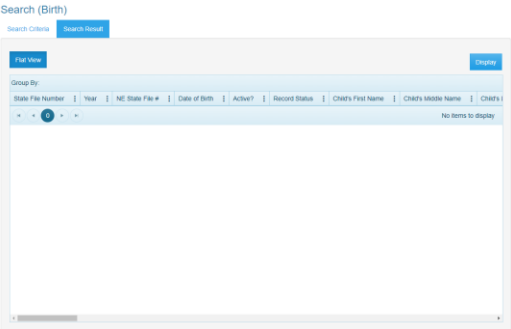


2. You will land on the *Search (Birth)* page. Enter the necessary information to find the birth record of the child you intend to report birth defects for.

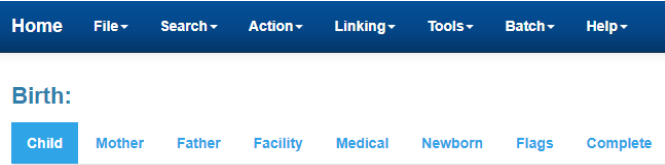
The image shows the 'Search (Birth)' page. At the top, there are two tabs: 'Search Criteria' (active) and 'Search Result'. Below the tabs is a form with various input fields and dropdown menus. The fields are organized into three columns. The first column contains: 'State File Number', 'Date of Birth' (with a date picker showing 01/01/2020), 'Child's Middle Name', 'Sex' (dropdown), 'Mother/Parent Middle Name', 'Father/Parent Legal First Name', 'Father/Parent Legal Suffix', 'State of Birth' (dropdown), and 'Hospital Completed' (dropdown). The second column contains: 'Year', 'Record Status' (dropdown), 'Child's Last Name' (with a text input showing 'Doé'), 'Paternity Queue', 'Mother/Parent Last Name', 'Father/Parent Legal Middle Name', 'User Location / Facility Name', 'County of Birth' (dropdown), and 'Douglas County Complete' (dropdown). The third column contains: 'NE State File #', 'Child's First Name' (with a text input showing 'John'), 'Child's Suffix' (dropdown), 'Child Last Name (Soundex)', 'Facility Name' (dropdown), 'Mother/Parent First Name', 'Mother/Parent Birth Last Name', 'Father/Parent Legal Last Name', 'Father/Parent Last Birth Name', 'Birth Local File Number', and 'Alert Count'. There are 'Clear' and 'Search' buttons at the top right of the form.

3. A table will appear in the **Search Result** tab of the *Search (Birth)* page. If multiple birth records match the search criteria, you will have to identify and select the correct row for the case you are reporting for; after selecting the correct row, click the **Display** button.
 - a. If no options appear in the table, you will either need to return to the Search Criteria tab and modify the fields and try the search again or – in the case that you

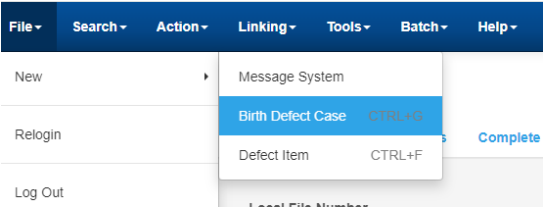
are completely unable to locate a birth record for the child – discontinue this process and proceed as though your facility was not a birthing facility (creating a new defect case from scratch).



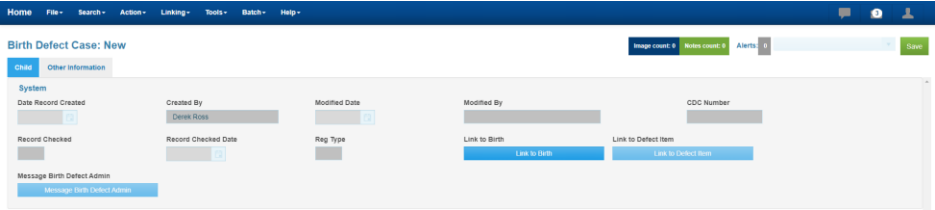
- 4. The **Birth** record page will open in a new tab (full page not pictured).
 - a. Before proceeding, briefly check the *Mother* tab and check the mother’s information to ensure they are a resident of Nebraska; if they are **not** a Nebraska resident, the birth defects should not be reported to this registry.



- 5. To create a new birth defect case connected to this birth record, click the **File** tab at the top of the page, then hover the over **New** on the drop-down menu that appears, and finally select **Birth Defect Case** from the secondary menu.
 - a. Alternatively, you can use the keyboard shortcut “CTRL + G” to create a new birth defect case.

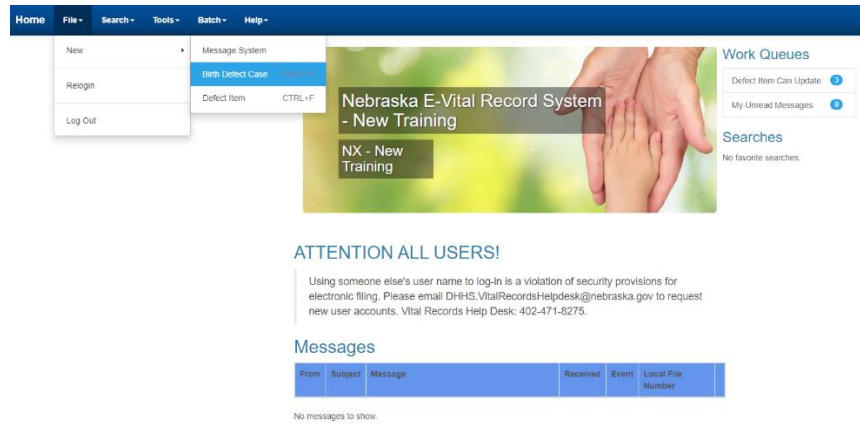


- 6. You will land on the *Birth Defect Case: New* page. The necessary information should automatically carry over from the birth record (child information, mother information, and father information as applicable). If everything on this new page appears to be in order, click the green **Save** button in the upper righthand corner of the page.



Non-Birthing (Referring) Facilities

1. With no ability to access the birth record of the child you intend to report birth defects for, a new birth defect case must be created from scratch. From the dashboard, click the **File** tab at the top of the page, hover over the **New** option from the drop-down menu that appears, and finally select **Birth Defect Case** from the secondary menu.
 - a. Alternatively, you can use the keyboard shortcut “CTRL + G” to create a new birth defect case.



2. You will land on the *Birth Defect Case: New* page. From here, enter the information of the child you intend to enter birth defect items for. Be sure all information is entered accurately and completely (ESPECIALLY all *child information* and *mother information*, including mother’s maiden name if at all possible).

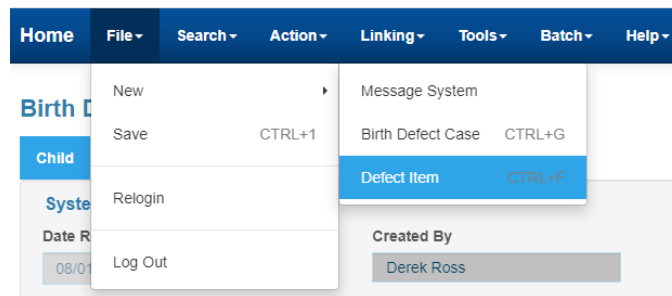
The screenshot displays the 'Birth Defect Case: New' form. The page has a blue header with navigation links and a 'Save' button in the top right corner. The form is divided into several sections: 'System' (with fields for Date Record Created, Created By, Modified Date, Modified By, CDC Number, Record Checked, Record Checked Date, Reg Type, Link to Birth, and Link to Defect Item), 'Child Information' (with fields for Child First Name, Last Name, Sex, Date of Birth, and Medical Record Number), 'Mother Information' (with fields for First Name, Last Name, Maiden Name, Mother Date of Birth, and Medical Record Number), and 'Father Information' (with fields for First Name, Last Name, Suffix, and Father Date of Birth). The 'Save' button is highlighted with a red circle.

3. Once you’re satisfied and certain all information you’ve entered is correct, click the green **Save** button in the upper righthand corner of the page to finalize the creation of the birth defect case.

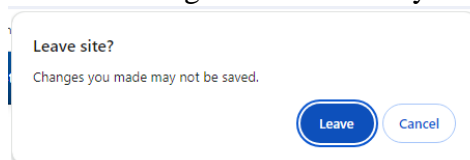


Adding a Birth Defect Item

1. Navigate to the birth defect case for which you would like to report a new birth defect (create a new defect item); this case should have been located or created per previous sections.
2. On the appropriate birth defect case page, click the File tab at the top of the page, hover over the New option that appears from the drop-down menu that appears, and finally select Defect Item from the secondary menu.
 - a. Alternatively, you can use the keyboard shortcut “CTRL + F” to create a new defect item.



3. If prompted with a pop-up window asking whether you would like to leave the current page, click the **Leave** button in blue.
 - a. You may run into this pop-up at various points while navigating the system, and it can be concerning for new users due to the “*Changes you made may not be saved*” statement; this pop-up merely exists as a reminder to save your edits, and it appears regardless of whether you’ve already saved your work (as the pop-up does not have a way of checking whether you’ve saved or even if you made any edits). Seeing this after saving **does not mean** your work will be lost.



4. You will land on the *Defect Item: New* page. The majority of the information on this page will automatically populate based on the birth defect case.

A screenshot of the 'Defect Item: New' page. The page has a blue header with navigation tabs: Home, File, Search, Action, Linking, Tools, Batch, Help. Below the header, there are two tabs: 'Defect information' (selected) and 'System info'. The main content area is divided into sections: 'System' (with fields for Date Record Created, Created By, Modified Date, Modified By, Record Checked, Record Checked Date, Defect Item ID, Reg Type, and a 'Link to Defect Case' button), 'Child' (with fields for First Name, Last Name, Date of Birth, and Sex), 'Defect Description' (with fields for Date Reported, Source of Report, Facility Name Reporting Defect, ICD-10-CM Code, Defect Description ICD 10 CM, and Defect Description ICD 9 CM). The footer shows '© 2024 Nexcelent Technologies, Inc.'

5. The only fields you will need to complete are the Source of Report field, in which you will select either **Facility of Birth** (for Birthing Facilities) or **Referring Facilities** (for Non-Birthing Facilities), and the ICD-10-CM Code for the defect you intend to report.
 - a. You can either type these in or click the arrow on the right side of the field to reveal a drop-down menu from which you can select the appropriate option.
 - b. If any additional notes pertaining to this birth defect entry need to be added, there is a large field at the bottom of the page where notes can be typed out.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Defect Description". It includes several input fields: "Date Reported" (08/01/2024), "Source of Report" (a dropdown menu with "FACILITY OF BIRTH" selected, circled in red), "Facility Name Reporting Defect" (CHI Health Bergan Mercy), "ICD-10-CM Code" (a dropdown menu with "Q05.1" selected, circled in red), "Defect Description ICD 10 CM" (Thoracic spina bifida with hydrocephalus), "Defect Description ICD 9 CM", "ICD-9-CM Code", "Message Birth Defect Admin" (Message: Birth Defect Admin), and a "Notes" text area at the bottom.

6. Once you're satisfied and certain all information you've entered is correct, click the green **Save** button in the upper righthand corner of the page to finalize the creation of the birth defect item.

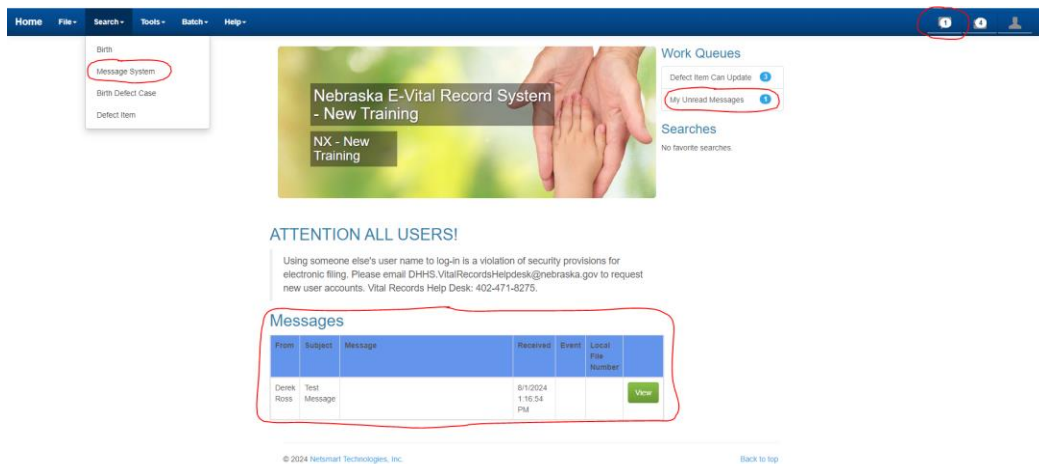
The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the application with links for Home, File, Search, Action, Linking, Tools, Batch, and Help. Below the navigation bar, the page title is "Defect Item: New". On the right side of the header, there are status indicators for "Image count: 0", "Notes count: 0", and "Alerts: 0". A green "Save" button is circled in red in the upper right corner of the page.

Messaging System

The VRERS system has a secure messaging system built into it that can be used to communicate with the birth defect coordinator at any time. There are several ways in which the messaging system is integrated into the record system, each of which will be briefly covered here; ultimately, though, the primary use of the system is to communicate important information or questions regarding the birth defect registry or specific pages/records.

Accessing Received Messages from the Dashboard

1. There are three different ways to access messages from the dashboard of the VRERS system, as well as a constantly available icon at the top-right corner of the page indicating whether you have any unread messages.

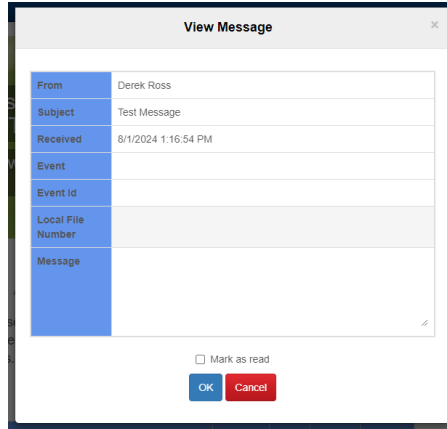


2. The most convenient access to new messages is at the bottom of the dashboard, where a table displays details pertaining to your unread messages and a **View** button in green pulls up the message immediately.

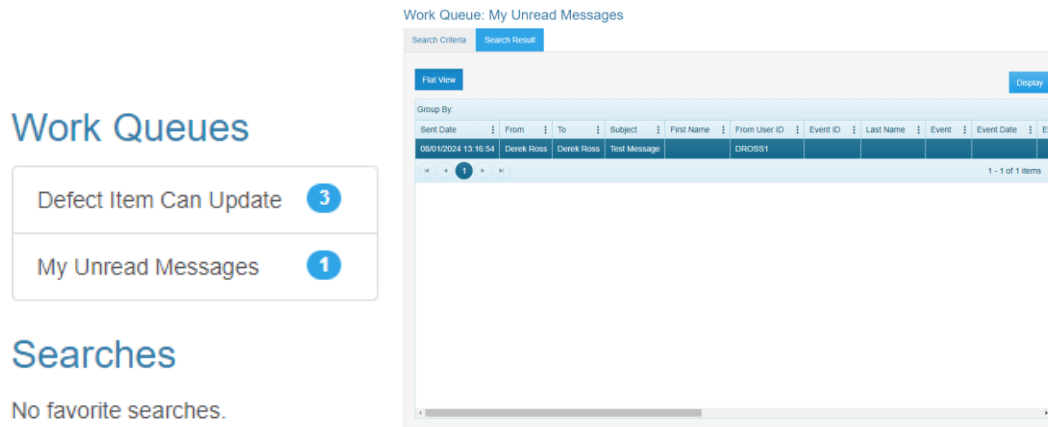
Messages

| From | Subject | Message | Received | Event | Local File Number | |
|------------|--------------|---------|---------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Derek Ross | Test Message | | 8/1/2024 1:16:54 PM | | | View |

Though you can view messages from here and mark the messages as read, you cannot respond directly from the window.

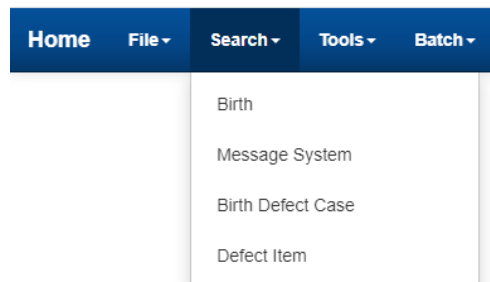


3. Beneath the *Work Queues* header of the dashboard, you can access a table of unread messages by clicking the **My Unread Messages** queue.



After identifying the message you want to view from the provided table, you can open to the Message System page for that message by clicking the Display button in blue in the upper righthand corner of the page.

4. The last method you can use to find a message from the dashboard is best for finding specific messages (say, if you wanted to find a message you know was sent on a specific date) using the **Search** feature. To use this feature, click the **Search** tab at the top of the dashboard and select the **Message System** from the drop-down menu that appears.



You can then complete the necessary fields in the *Search (Message System)* page to locate the message you are looking for.

Search (Message System)

Search Criteria Search Result

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Sent Date | From | To |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Subject | First Name | From User ID |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Event ID | Last Name | Event |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Event Date | Event entered by login | To User ID |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Event entered by | Userlocation | Userlocation Code |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| To Group | Has been read? | |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | |

Clear Search

Functionality of the Message System

Received Messages

1. Once a message has been located, there are various valuable functions available within the message system.

Home File Search Action Linking Tools Batch Help

Message System: 1039838

Image count: 0 Notes count: 0 Alerts

Message

| | | | |
|------------|---------|---------------|---------------------|
| From | User ID | From Location | Sent Date |
| Derek Ross | DROSS1 | CENTRAL | 2024-09-07T13:10:54 |

| | | | |
|------------|-----------|--------------|-------|
| To | Date Read | Mark As Read | Reply |
| Derek Ross | | Mark As Read | Reply |

Email Address
derek.ross@nebraska.gov

Message

Subject: Text Message

Message
This message is a text (see subject)

Send
Send

Previous Message

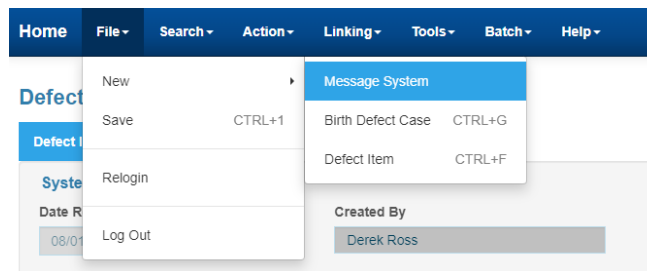
Event Information
© 2024 Heliosoft Technologies, Inc.

You can of course see who sent and received the message in the **To** and **From** sections, as well as the content of the message under the **Message** section (and the content of the previous message in the chain, if applicable). Another valuable section is the *Event Information* section at the bottom of the page, which displays some of the key information pertaining to the record being discussed, if applicable, as well as a link to the record itself.

The two primary functions you can perform from this page are to mark the message as read (so it no longer appears as unread and is removed from the dashboard, the icon at the top right corner of the screen, and the unread messages queue) by pressing the **Mark as Read** button in blue, and to reply to the message by pressing the **Reply** button in blue (next to the **Mark as Read** button).

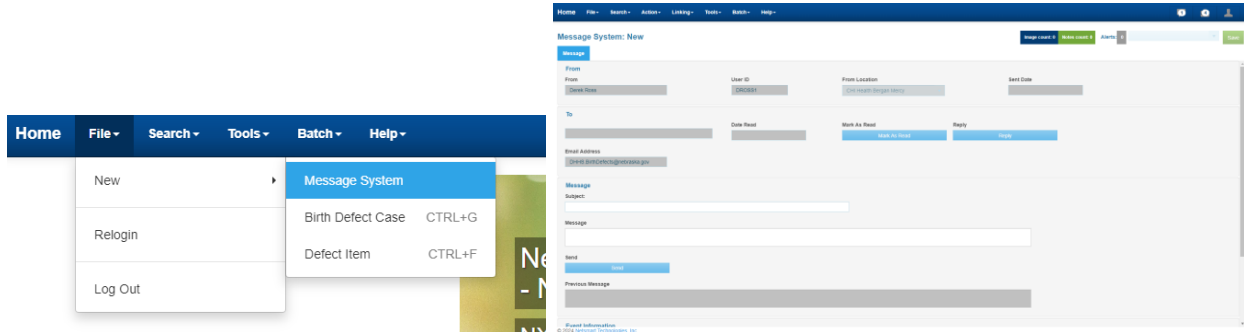
Creating New Messages

1. New messages can be created in two ways, each useful in different situations. If a message is meant to pertain to a specific page (birth record, birth defect case, defect item), you should first navigate to that page. From the desired page, click the **File** tab at the top of the page, then hover over the **New** option in the associated drop-down menu, and finally select **Message System** from the secondary menu that appears.



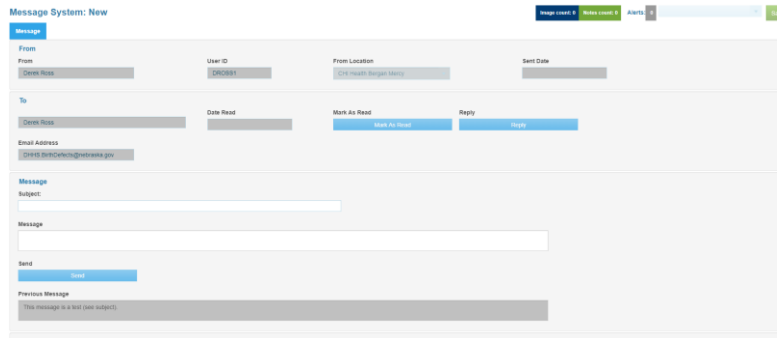
The message created in this manner will automatically link to the page you're discussing, which is a major convenience to avoid unnecessary searching.

- The other option for sending a message is useful for more general messages (ones not related to specific pages). From the dashboard, click the **File** tab at the top of the page, hover over the **New** option in the associated drop-down menu, and finally select **Message System**. You will be redirected to the *Message System: New* page.

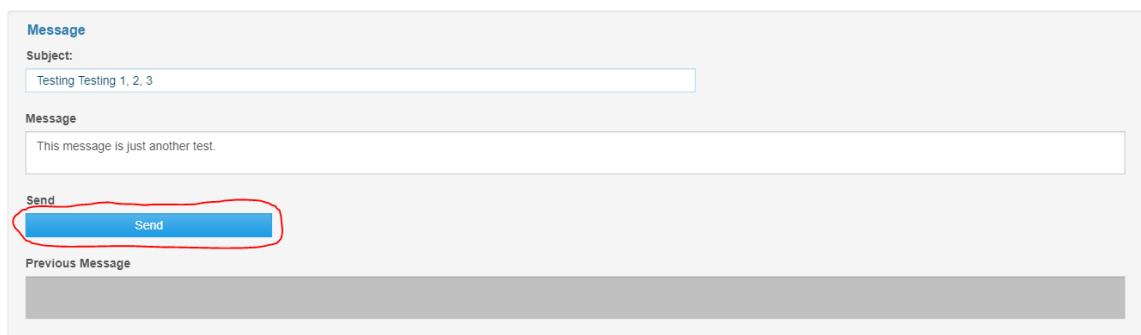


Sending New Messages or Replies

- From the *Messages System: New* page (created by following the previous instructions regarding replying to a message or creating a new message), sending a message is rather straightforward. The **From** information and the **To** information will automatically populate (as you can only send messages to the birth defect coordinator), leaving you to type out the **Subject** and **Message** as applicable under the *Message* section.



When you are satisfied with the contents of your message, simply press the **Send** button in blue beneath the contents of the message you typed out. Note the recipient will also receive an email notifying them that they have received a new message in the VRERS system.

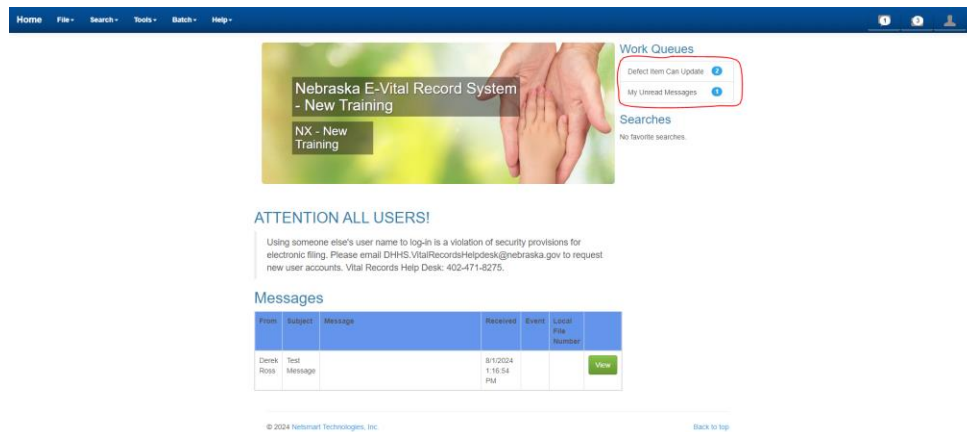


Work Queues

Aside from adding whatever birth defects need to be added for your site, the work queues should also be considered on every login as items that may need to be addressed. Note that the **My Unread Messages** queue functionality was described in length in the previous section, so only a brief overview will be covered here.

Defect Item Can Update

1. From the dashboard, select the first option under the **Work Queues** header, **Defect Item Can Update**.



2. You will land on the **Work Queue: Defect Item Can Update** page, which displays a table of all the defect items your facility has entered which have not yet been reviewed by the birth defect coordinator. You can open to any of these pages by selecting the appropriate row and clicking the **Display** button at the upper righthand corner of the page.

Work Queue: Defect Item Can Update

Search Criteria | Search Result

Flat View | Images: 0 | Notes: 0 | Display

Group By:

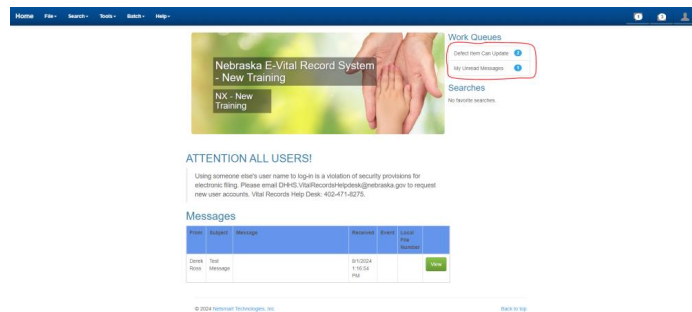
| Date of Birth | Child First Name | Child Last Name | Facility Name Reporting Defect | ICD10 | Checked | Active? | Defect Description ICD 10 |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------|---------|---------|---------------------------|
| 01/01/2020 | Johi | Doé | CHI Health Bergan Mercy | Q25.0 | | T | Patent ductus arteriosus |
| 01/01/2020 | Johi | Doé | CHI Health Bergan Mercy | Q17.0 | | T | Accessory auricle |

« 1 » 1 - 2 of 2 items

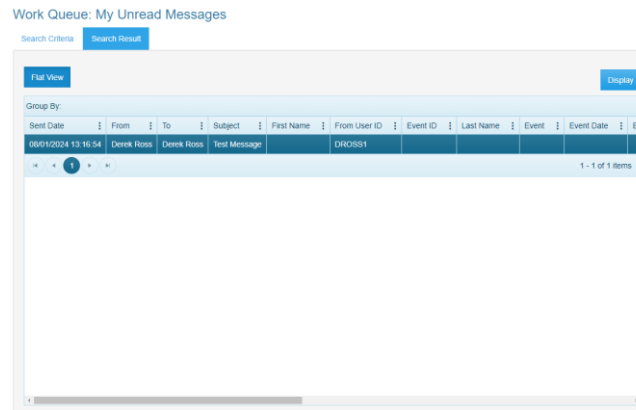
There is no way for you to remove items from the queue – it is purely there for your review in the case that you need to make any updates, ensure information was entered correctly, etc. Items will only be removed from this queue once they have been reviewed and “checked” by the birth defect coordinator. Once defect items have been checked by the coordinator and removed from the queue, you will no longer be able to edit the item and will have to contact the birth defect coordinator with any information you need to change.

My Unread Messages

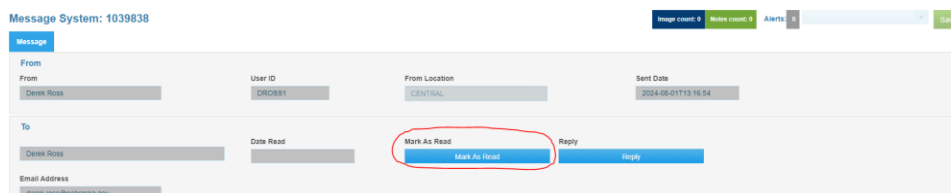
1. From the dashboard, select the second option under the **Work Queues** header, **My Unread Messages**.



2. You will land on the **Work Queue: My Unread Messages** page, which displays a table of all the unread messages you’ve received and have not yet read or marked as read. You can open to any of these messages by selecting the appropriate row and clicking the **Display** button at the upper righthand corner of the page.



Items will not clear from this queue if you read or reply to them; items will only clear from this queue if you click the **Mark as Read** button on the **Message System** page of the message.



Key Terms

1. **Nebraska E-Vital Record System (VRERS):** Electronic data repository for a variety of health records pertaining to Nebraska citizens, including birth records, death records, birth defect cases, defect items, and more.
 - a. **Dashboard:** The first page that opens upon accessing the VRERS system; the home page. This page displays a variety of helpful tools, notifications, and shortcuts to various frequently used sections of the system.
 - b. **Navigation Bar:** Primary navigation tool within the VRERS system; located at the top of the page at all times while utilizing the VRERS system, the various tabs available in the bar can be used to access any desired page of the system at any time.
2. **Birth Record:** Similar to a digital birth certificate; these are entered into the e-vital record system by birthing facility staff and contain extensive information regarding all births that occur in Nebraska.
3. **Birth Defect Case:** A file of sorts containing all individual birth defects (birth defect items) affecting a child born in Nebraska; each birth record can only be associated with a single birth defect case.
4. **Defect Item:** Record of an individual birth defect affecting a child born in Nebraska; while a defect item can be associated with only with a single birth defect case, a birth defect case can contain numerous defect items.
5. **Birthing Facilities:** Healthcare facilities which report births as well as birth defects to the VRERS system.
6. **Non-Birthing Facilities:** Healthcare facilities in which births do not occur and are not reported, but which do report other occurrences such as birth defect identifications to the VRERS system.
7. **Work Queues:** Hubs accessible from the VRERS dashboard containing items that may require your attention each time you access the system.
8. **Birth Defect Registry Data Coordinator:** Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (Office of Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology) employee responsible for maintaining the birth defect registry in VRERS; primary point of contact for all healthcare facility staff with questions or concerns regarding the birth defect registry.

Birth Defect Registry Data Coordinator Contact Information

Current Coordinator and Hours: Derek Ross, M-F 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Birth Defect Coordinator Email: DHHS.BirthDefects@nebraska.gov

Birth Defect Coordinator Phone Number: (402) 471-0354

Current Coordinator Email: Derek.Ross@nebraska.gov

Current Coordinator Work Cell Phone Number: (531) 530-7456