Civil registration and universal health coverage seem like quintessentially modern technologies, but many poorer countries today still lack both. There is now an international drive to extend at least birth registration to all societies, but there remains much less consensus on the practicality of statutory universal health care. In this presentation, Simon Szreter shows that state-sanctioned universal registration of vital events has a much longer history than is commonly realised. History suggests that the effectiveness of universal registration and health care may be closely related.

What role do civil registration and vital statistics systems play within a universal health system? Will CRVS be useful anchors for universal health? Anneke Schmider will explore universal health in the public policy context, the nature of universal health systems, and seek to identify where civil registration and vital statistics systems will play their part.

For more information, please contact: GHHistories@who.int