

We ask that you use your emergency powers to ensure death care workers are included in any state and/or local guidance or mandatory order identifying death care workers among essential critical infrastructure workers. This would ensure:

1. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) availability and access:

In order to perform essential public health tasks, death care workers must have access to PPE. Caring for the bodies of individuals who died with COVID-19 places funeral directors and embalmers at risk for exposure to the virus. We ask that you include death care as an “essential service” so death care workers receive priority access to PPE.

2. Exemption from quarantine orders:

We request formal exemption from federal and state “lockdown” and “shelter-in-place” orders, as well as from mandatory business closures. We urge you to clarify that “essential infrastructure” and “essential businesses and services” include death care providers who provide essential services critical to the health, safety and sanitation of communities, as well as suppliers of funeral products to funeral homes, cemeteries and crematories.

3. Priority for testing and vaccines:

Due to the high risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus while caring for the bodies of those who die due to COVID-19, we request that death care workers be included in the top-tier of essential services to receive testing and a vaccine when it becomes available. In 2008, when facing the H1N1 pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) elevated “Mortuary Service Providers” to the Tier II level for vaccine prioritization. There were six tiers to the system, with the most critical workers and personnel in Tiers I, II, and III. We ask for similar consideration for our members as a COVID-19 vaccine is developed.

On behalf of our members and all death care professionals in Kentucky we are grateful for your leadership and stand ready, as always, to care for the dead and the families left behind. Please let us know if there is anything you need from us during this pandemic, and beyond.

Sincerely,



Sidney Fogle
Executive Director

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