



The Honorable Michelle Lujan-Grisham,
Governor of the State of New Mexico

Dear Governor Lujan-Grisham,

The fundamental purpose of a funeral home is public health and safety. In light of recent mandates and restrictions, please take a moment to view the repercussions. Our current process in New Mexico for moving forward with disposition involves the securing of a doctor's signature on a death certificate and receiving a cremation permit from the Office of the Medical Investigator. Our system is currently suffering under the strain of COVID-19 and the unfortunate increase in mortality from this devastating virus. In lieu of additional refrigerated trucks to hold loved ones, we offer the following solutions in addition to all you are doing to keep fellow New Mexicans safe:

1. Please mandate that all doctors are immediately required to be on the DAVE electronic death certificate system. This will expedite the initial step in our process and reduce our own staff's exposure in facilities such as nursing homes, hospitals and doctors' offices.
2. The often more time-consuming part of the process is the permit required by the Office of the Medical Investigator. Although a necessity in cases of homicide, suicide or accident, the time it takes during a pandemic to receive a permit is time that can be spent by a funeral home performing a cremation, thus keeping the flow in motion. We would propose that temporarily, during this difficult time, and specifically for COVID deaths, that a funeral home receive a signed death certificate which, when states COVID as a cause of death, allows them to forego the cremation permit. Again, the goal is to be able to expedite disposition and reduce the risk to our staff and others to longer term exposure to deceased individuals who are COVID +.
3. In addition to these roadblocks, gathering restrictions are also inhibiting our ability to safely serve the public as families begin to stall, delay and wait to have the service they feel is fitting to honor a life. The majority of our services are, indeed, religious in nature and context. We would respectfully ask to be removed from the "Mass Gathering" grouping and allowed to safely practice our profession at 25% occupancy. Funeral service is in high regulation by our New Mexico State Board, as well as OSHA and our Licensed Funeral Service Practitioners have studied and, for years, been aware of microbiological and pathological diseases.

The current crisis is very much like a dam, and we are hindering the flow even more. Please know that with the estimated death numbers provided in your November 30, 2020 press conference, New Mexico will be a mirror image of El Paso in the coming days and weeks. We urge you to allow us to help you and our fellow New Mexicans by considering the above solutions. As funeral professionals, we are very committed to public service, public safety and the dignity of life.

Respectfully,

Joshua McManigal – President, Michael McIntire – Vice President, Lisa Dalton - Secretary / Treasurer,
J. Buck Dyck – Director at Large, Robert Noblin – Past President