



Home Funerals During COVID-19

- Traditional home funerals and body care are not recommended for COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 deaths
 - Standard infectious disease precautions and protocols are required
 - Home Funeral Guides lack appropriate personal protective equipment
 - OSHA recommends prompt disposition by burial or direct cremation
 - Transportation of a COVID-19 decedent must be done by a state licensed representative
- Home Funeral Guides can be a source of comfort and accurate information for families, even when at a distance
 - Share accurate and up to date end of life information with your community through social media, online conferencing, electronically, and by phone
 - Start the conversation! Many people are struggling in isolation with end of life questions. HFGs and Doulas are prepared to step into the more challenging conversations around death and dying
- It is up to the discretion of individual Home Funeral Guides to choose to support NonCovid-19 deaths in-person
 - Social distancing requirements and COVID-19 concerns limit the opportunities for safe, hands-on death care by Home Funeral Guides not living within the residence of the deceased
 - Home Funeral Guides can support all families in advance of a death and even during body care, by phone, Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime
 - NonCOVID-19 deaths occurring at home within a “pod” (individuals who have been living together for at least two weeks), can conduct after death care and hold private vigil
- The Maryland Department of Vital Records is currently closed to the public for Death Certificate and Body Transport Permit filing
 - Vital Records is only accepting electronically filed Death Certificates, which requires institutional portal access (hospitals, nursing homes, hospices, funeral homes, crematoriums)
- Reach out to local funeral homes, crematoriums, and cemeteries to learn the changes to service options and then share within your community
 - Maryland State guidelines require all gatherings to be 10 or fewer people, including Funeral Directors and Officiants
 - Most providers are offering only limited in-person services, if any at all, which will change slightly for each establishment and as new data is released about COVID-19
- Encourage family and friends to write down their end of life wishes
 - Any time is the right time to complete an Advance Directive and/or Five Wishes. However, with the current increase in intubation and ventilation, it is especially important to be clear about end of life choices
- Harness this opportunity to be creative in supporting family, friends, and community with end of life issues during this time
 - Empowering families, after all, is what this work is all about!