



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

ROBERT GORDON
DIRECTOR

March 24, 2020

Dear Michigan Funeral Directors:

On March 18, 2020 Michigan experienced its first death to COVID19. As of this writing, early in the morning on March 24, we are at 15 deaths according to news media sources, but only 3 with filed death certificates. As the number of positive coronavirus infections continues to increase, we can expect mortality to increase as well. Michigan law requires medical certification of death within 48 hours and a completed death certificate to be filed within 72 hours from death. It is essential that we have death certificates filed for these events as quickly as possible so that public health officials have access to the latest information to guide the response to this pandemic. We are asking for your help in the following ways:

1. Use the Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS). Most funeral directors use this system, but some still use paper death certificates. We are asking that all funeral directors process all death certificates using EDRS to ensure the fastest possible turnaround. Use of EDRS also complies with Governor Whitmer's Stay Home, Stay Safe order by allowing death certificates to be completed entirely online.

You can find more information, including instructions on how to register for EDRS, on the internet at <https://michiganedrs.org>. Please feel free to call us at (517) 335-6506 for more information or to schedule a brief online training session for EDRS.

2. Work with physicians and medical examiners to get cause of death certified quickly. We know this is a challenge and we will also be working to bring as many of these users onto EDRS as quickly as possible. In the interim, we are requesting that you fax or scan and securely email a pdf of the Death Certificate or short form Medical Certificate of Death to physicians for cause of death certification. If you encounter a delay in getting a death medically certified, please let us know so that we can help to resolve the situation. You can reach us at the phone number listed above.
3. Encourage families to not delay the death certificate process while waiting for COVID19 test results. Certifying physicians can use terms like 'likely' or 'suspected' when there is not a confirmed test result. In addition, death certificates can be amended based on a positive test result. It is always better to get the death certificate filed timely.

We appreciate the work that you continue to do to support Michiganders during this unprecedented time, especially those families impacted by this pandemic. We are also grateful for your continued support of public health efforts to combat this crisis. If you have any questions at all for me, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey P. Duncan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeffrey" being more prominent.

Jeffrey Duncan, PhD, State Registrar and Director
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