

# Registrar's COVID-19 Update

**Ready ... together**



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# We are prepared – but a Tsunami is coming

- I hope that term – Tsunami – doesn't sound shocking.
  - If it does – then we need a shock
- We are preparing for the worst (hoping for the best)
- We need only look at **Italy** to see what could happen here
- Canada and Ontario have prepared. But so did Europe.
- Let's not take anything for granted
- That's why my Registrar's Notices turned to Directives – quickly

# We are prepared – but a Tsunami is coming








- My advice and repeat of Directives today come with this note about all of you
- I continue to be in awe of the skills and compassion you have as funeral directors, staff, and all bereavement licensees
- **Now is time to put your talents and calling to work in earnest**
- Don't let this relative lull in the action fool you. The virus is spreading now
- My conservative estimate – Based on Europe's experience with COVID-19 – **We could have 20,000 additional cases by Easter (April 12)**
- I hope that my estimate is too high – but in fact it may be too low
- Of concern is the small communities and the potential demand on local FH (Bobcaygeon)

# We Have A Plan...

## **Still in the planning – but moving fast are –**

- Chief Coroner for Ontario is working with the BAO and OFSA/OACFP to address the anticipated surge in fatalities. We have established a “Surge Preparation Committee”
- The strategy is based on several principles:
  - i. Dignity and respect of decedents and families
  - ii. Move decedents from healthcare to funeral sector without delay to place them into care of people best-trained and equipped
  - iii. Relieve burden on healthcare – devote their attention on the living
  - iv. Avoid mass storage of decedents in alternative facilities (arenas etc.)
  - v. Limit movement/transfer of bodies
  - vi. Death care remains local/community not centralized

# We Have A Plan...

1. Death (Hospital/LTC)
-  2. Hospital contacts OCC team – creates Electronic Medical Certificate of Death EMCOD.
-  3. Dedicated hospital resource obtains name of funeral home from family on day of death and facilitates family contact of funeral home.
-  4. Funeral Home/Body Transport attends LTC/hospital to transfer deceased person into their care.
-  5. EMCOD from OCC to Funeral Home.
-  6. Funeral Home prepares body for disposition – burial or cremation or hydrolysis.
-  7. Funeral Home obtains burial permit.
-  8. Disposition

# We can handle the surge...but it depends on YOU.

- 24/7 response – **get this organized now !**
- How will you obtain authorization from family?
- Interment - Burial, cremation, or alternate disposition
  - **to occur as soon as possible**
- Have back-up plan for everything you do
- **No storing bodies** – that would quickly become a problem in the pandemic
- Communicate with your cemetery and crematorium; you can share cause of death info with them
- Remember we're in a "State of Emergency"

# COVID-19 Update – Ready...together

## Here's what you must do

- Follow the Directives – follow the rules – **strictly**
  - **10 MAX or LESS, physical distancing, wash hands, PPE...**
- It only takes one infected person at one funeral to set off a local outbreak with devastating results
- Don't think of how many...*think of how few*
- Instruct your families – it's your premises and your/your staff safety
- Look at Newfoundland
  - As of Monday, **111 people infected** in Newfoundland and Labrador. They got the virus directly or indirectly **from one funeral home** in St. John's. **A 78-year-old man has died**. The person who started the virus spread there had no idea of being infected.

# COVID-19 Update – Ready...Together

## Here's what is in the works for you and Ontario families

- Electronic death certificates
- Easier to obtain (electronic) Burial Permits
- The Ontario government is working hard to have **more PPE** ready for you



# Support for the Sector

- **You are essential – officially and otherwise**
- I have asked the Ontario government
  - To treat the bereavement sector as they do health care right now
    - Specifically, this means I've asked for funding for funeral homes, crematoriums, alternate disposition, transfer services
  - For much more PPE for the bereavement sector

# Support for the Sector

## **Funding Sources Available Now:**

- Federal Government 75% wage subsidy program
- Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) - small business loans, zero interest, 25% forgivable

# Support for the Sector

- Government has heard me – loud and clear
  - No reply yet – Understandable at this time –
- **But they are working on it all**
- I will let you know as soon as I know
- So far, I have been impressed with how our government has handled this pandemic.
  - Hindsight is 20/20 – so it's easy to say what we all should have done. But still – government's commitment is clear

# Questions welcome

- Reference our [BAO COVID-19 web section](#)
- [Ministry of Health COVID-19 Guidance:  
Funeral and Bereavement Services](#)