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ICCFA Requests Inclusion of Deathcare Professionals in All COVID-19 Orders

STERLING, VA (March 19, 2020) – In light of the current worldwide COVID-19 outbreak, many U.S. Federal agencies, state health departments, and other local agencies are issuing various orders ranging from size restrictions of public gatherings all the way to shelter-in-place orders. On behalf of its members and the entire deathcare profession, the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA) is requesting that all such orders should include deathcare professionals in the list of “essential services.”

Currently, most orders are identifying that only essential activities and businesses are to remain open. Included in these orders are health care operations as well as other businesses related to general health and essential infrastructure. ICCFA believes all deathcare professionals - this would include funeral homes, crematories, cemeteries, as well as the suppliers to these businesses - are related and essential infrastructure. ICCFA is sending a letter to various Federal, state and local agencies encouraging any new orders to specifically identify the deathcare profession as an essential business and function.

Properly identifying deathcare professionals in this way will allow them to remain in a position to aid in this crisis. This designation will also allow them to receive needed supplies and have priority access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as this crisis continues.

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ICCFA suggests the use of the following language in any orders:

For the purposes of this Order, “Essential Businesses” means:

Deathcare Professionals and Essential Infrastructure, including licensed funeral homes, crematories, cemeteries, as well as all suppliers of funeral products to funeral service providers, which provide essential services that are critical to the health, safety and sanitation of the community.

ICCFA has likewise added our support to a letter from the deathcare association community to the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services on behalf of our collective memberships, requesting deathcare be designated as an “essential service” so our members can have priority access to PPEs, exemption from federal and state “lock down” and “shelter in place” orders and mandatory business closures, and that deathcare workers be included in the top-tier of essential services to receive a vaccine when it becomes available.

Also, in response to the COVID-19 crisis, ICCFA President, Jay Dodds, has endorsed the creation of a Disaster Management Committee, which will be a multi-disciplinary team selected for their specific areas of expertise. This committee will provide suggested guidance and help in response to national disasters that affect ICCFA members, their employees, their businesses and the families they serve.

For timely and actionable recommendations that specifically address the concerns of deathcare professionals serving their communities during this public health crisis, please visit the ICCFA website at www.iccfa.com/covid-19.

Founded in 1887, the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association is the only international trade association representing all segments of the cemetery, cremation, funeral and memorialization profession. Its membership is composed of more than 9,100 rooftop locations and 18,000 professionals in the cemetery, funeral home and crematory industries, as well as supplier and related businesses worldwide.

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