

# MEMBER UPDATE



NEWS FROM THE NEW JERSEY STATE FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION, INC.

*Dear NJSFDA Member,*

Effective 9 p.m. this evening (Saturday, March 21, 2020) all funeral homes are operating under newly issued [Executive Order #107](#).

This requires the immediate cooperation of all licensees and involves difficult conversations that without delay should be had with next-of-kin—conceivably altering arrangements currently under your care.

In order to curtail community-spread and provide for adequate social distancing, all residents are ordered to remain in their residences and not gather publicly. **All public funeral gatherings, viewings or ceremonies therefore should not be conducted in any funeral home, place of worship, cemetery or crematory until further notice.** Only immediate family should be permitted to privately identify, participate in a non-public viewing and/or abbreviated service and witness the final disposition (if the individual cemetery or crematory permits).

There are no embalming or final disposition method restrictions in place at this time. Burial, cremation, entombment, and donation are all permissible. Decedents should not be stored or held for future memorialization. Again, removal, preparation and disposition should take place in the most timely and efficient manner possible with all public memorial events, ceremony and services postponed until this order is lifted. Every funeral home is requested to creatively assist families through their grief that has been compounded by these necessary restrictions.

Funeral home staff may continue to operate under this order and next-of-kin, those not subject to quarantine, may make arrangements either in the funeral home or at their residence. (More information will be made available in [The FORUM](#) regarding arranging with next-of-kin under quarantine.)

Please understand that we are at the start of a new norm, a norm estimated to last eight weeks, and so we do not fully know when the true surge of COVID-19 spread will be felt in each of our lives.

Funeral homes are beginning to personally feel the physical and emotional strain of staff illness and absenteeism. By focusing on arrangements, non-public gathering of the immediate family and disposition, some logistical concerns may be temporarily met. Please reach out to one another if in need and know that the NJSFDA is available to answer your questions and will provide important information as it becomes available in the FORUM.

Because the primary concern remains with the living, not the dead, continue to properly disinfect all public, common, removal and preparation room surfaces such as doorknobs, switch plates, stair rails, phones, steering wheels, tables, counter-tops and the like.

We will all get through this unprecedented event together. Be safe.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. R. Kelder Jr.", is positioned above the typed name and title.

George R. Kelder Jr., CFSP  
CEO/Executive Director