

TO: Vermont Nursing Homes, Long Term Care Facilities and Hospice Facilities
FROM: Vermont Department of Health

Requirements by the Vermont Funeral Directors Association and Vermont Department of Health to Facilitate the Transfer of Deceased Patients from Nursing Homes, Long-Term Care Facilities and Hospice Facilities

This Health Advisory was developed by and is shared on behalf of the Vermont Funeral Directors Association, and supersedes the [March 23, 2020 Health Alert](#).

It is important that we work together to expedite the transfer of decedents in order that a family may proceed to make plans for their loved one.

To help expedite response by the funeral establishment, we request the following:

- Verbal consent to transfer the decedent documented from next of kin and contact information immediately available for a funeral establishment to reach out to them.
- If a respiratory infection or other COVID-like illness is the suspected or known cause of death, be sure to advise the funeral establishment when the transfer is requested.
- In accordance with currently limited access to shrouds, we ask that remains be wrapped in a sheet with airways covered to minimize inadvertent aerosolization.
- The practice of escorting a patient to the transfer vehicle should cease at this time.
- In order to minimize exposures for patients, facility staff and funeral home staff, and to minimize access to patient floors, facilities should identify an area near an exit with easy access for funeral home staff to transfer remains from the facility. In some facilities, this may be the lobby or backdoor access.
- Transfers require a coordinated effort and outreach between the facility and funeral establishment about the estimated time of arrival. Please understand that transfers may not be as expeditious as they typically are, but the funeral home staff will work with facilities to coordinate. If the deceased patient is in a multi-bed unit, facilities should consider identifying a location for a temporary holding site or morgue so the deceased can be moved to that area until transfer.
- If stretchers are not available to move the deceased patient to a more accessible area, please refer to your facility's disaster plan on the transfer of in bed patients.
- Maintain familiarity with [CDC guidelines](#) specific for health care workers, nursing homes and other facilities.

The members of the Vermont Funeral Directors Association would like to thank facilities and their staff for their continued efforts to provide care and comfort.

If you have any questions, please contact the HAN Coordinator at 802-859-5900 or vthan@vermont.gov.

HAN Message Type Definitions

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service Message: Provides general correspondence from VDH, which is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.