



March 26, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
PO Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711-2428

Dear Governor Abbott:

The Texas Funeral Directors Association (TFDA) has been working closely with your office, HHS/DHSH, as well as other State Leaders and Texas funeral professionals in responding to the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. We applaud the critical steps Texas has taken at your directive to limit the spread of COVID-19; and to mitigate the impact of illness, suffering and death.

In efforts to stop and/or slow the spread of COVID-19, we are requesting the temporary suspension of state and local cremation permits of all suspected or positive COVID-19 decedents. This temporary suspension should still require the Cremation Authorization Form requirement as mandated in the Texas Health and Safety Code 716.052.

It is the belief of many TFDA members that storing suspected or positive COVID-19 decedents for longer than necessary poses potential health risks to workers performing mortuary services, including funeral homes, crematoriums as listed as essential critical infrastructure workforce by Homeland Security CISA.

In many instances these positive COVID-19 cases are being temporarily stored with other deceased where a family chose a traditional burial or a private family viewing. Most mortuary coolers hold multiple decedents and are open and closed countless times a day, which forces rapid air movement in confined spaces in which Funeral Directors and Crematory operators are exposed.

On behalf of our members and the more than 6,000 deathcare professionals in Texas, we are grateful for your leadership and stand ready, as always, to care for the dead and the families left behind.

Sincerely,

Harvey Hilderbran
Executive Director