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TO: Hospital Emergency Management Contacts  
FROM: Florida Hospital Association  
SUBJECT: Death Certificate and Cremation Authorization Information  
August 18, 2020

On Friday, August 14, the Florida Medical Examiners Commission took action to decrease the time needed to issue a death certificate and cremation authorization for persons who have died from COVID-19.

The volume of COVID-19 cases pending with medical examiner offices has created significant delays in the issuance of death certificates and cremation authorizations. It has proven to be unsustainable for the State's medical examiner system and is diverting resources from unnatural deaths the medical examiners must investigate and certify. The Commission cited the knowledge gained from the COVID-19 pandemic during the past five months, the delay in obtaining medical records and the overwhelming number of cases that have resulted in growing backlogs for many districts throughout the State.

The Commission authorized that Florida medical examiners need not accept jurisdiction of COVID-19 related deaths unless the provisions of [Rule 11G-2.001\(3\), F.A.C.](#), apply, which provide the following:

- If a medical examiner becomes aware of a death, apparently from disease, he or she shall investigate it as a death from a disease constituting a threat to the public health, if:
  - The investigation is requested by an official of the Department of Health pursuant to Section 381.0011 or 381.0012, F.S., or
  - The medical examiner determines that additional information concerning the cause and mechanism of death, beyond that available in the decedent's medical history, is needed to protect the public health.

Medical examiners will not automatically assume jurisdiction of COVID-19 cases and treating physicians may certify COVID-19 deaths. It was noted that any pending cases accepted by medical examiners would still be certified by the medical examiner.

Questions can be directed to the [Division of Funeral, Cemetery, and Consumer Services](#) at the Florida Department of Financial Services [via email](#) or by phone at (850) 413-4984.

Contact the [FHA Incident Management Team](#) with any questions. Thank you.