



NEWS RELEASE

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

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State Activates Michigan Mortuary Response Team for First Time *Collaborative will help health care facilities, funeral homes and families identify and transport remains during COVID-19 pandemic*

LANSING, MICH. Michigan has activated the Michigan Mortuary Response Team (MI-MORT) to assist local health care facilities and funeral homes with the surge in human remains during the COVID-19 pandemic. The MDHHS Bureau of EMS, Trauma, and Preparedness and the Michigan Funeral Directors Association are taking this action.

MI-MORT is a collaborative effort of approximately 40 volunteers from across the state, including medical examiners and investigators, law enforcement, forensic scientists, chaplains and funeral directors. The team provides safe and secure transfer, identification and storage of human remains until funeral homes can help families make plans.

“This is a challenging time for health care facilities and families across our state, particularly those experiencing loss. Michiganders who lose a loved one as a result of COVID-19 shouldn’t have to worry about whether they can make final arrangements,” said Timothy Schramm, funeral director for Howe-Peterson and commander of MI-MORT. “Our volunteers are dedicated to providing comfort and reassurance that a person’s remains are safe and properly, professionally handled as quickly as possible at every step.”

MI-MORT was established 10 years ago as part of emergency and disaster planning led by the MDHHS Bureau of EMS, Trauma and Preparedness. This is the first time the team has been activated. Volunteers are trained to assist in a variety of emergency and disaster scenarios.

MDHHS reports more than 3,500 COVID-19 deaths since the state’s first case was confirmed March 10.

Health care facilities and local officials request MI-MORT assistance through their local medical examiner and emergency management team. MI-MORT works with the medical examiner and local emergency manager to determine needs.

A private and secure central collection center has been established to provide security and privacy for patients who died, their families and the local funeral homes.

Professionals interested in volunteering with MI-MORT may sign up through the Michigan Volunteer Registry at www.mivolunteerregistry.org.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at Michigan.gov/Coronavirus and CDC.gov/Coronavirus.

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