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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 29, 2020

CONTACT: Bob Wheaton, 517-241-2112

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 funeral home in Wayne County 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**.

# # #

RELATED CONTENT

Governor Whitmer Signs Executive Order Creating Eviction Diversion Program

Governor Whitmer Creates Bipartisan Task Force, Takes Action to Protect Nursing Home Residents and Staff from COVID-19

Michigan Department of Insurance and Financial Services Promotes Mortgage Relief Options, Insurance During American Housing Month

Governor Whitmer Extends Executive Order Allowing Administrative Hearings by Phone, Video Conference

Michigan National Guard to assist with no-cost community COVID-19 testing in Manistee this week

Governor Whitmer's Office Statement on 6th Circuit Court Ruling

Governor Whitmer Extends Executive Order Enabling Remote Transactions

Dr. Joneigh Khaldun calls for federal action to strengthen public health infrastructure and address health disparities in testimony to Congress

UIA to eliminate claims backlog; All unpaid claims filed before May 1st will have a determination by July 4th

Critical Support for Small Businesses, Community Revitalization Efforts Approved by Michigan Strategic Fund

Over 2 Million Michigan Workers Provided $11 Billion in Unemployment Benefits

Michigan National Guard to Assist with No-Cost Community COVID-19 Testing at Four New Sites Friday

Governor Whitmer Extends State of Emergency to Continue Protecting the Health and Safety of Michiganders

Governor Whitmer Extends Executive Order Allowing Public Bodies to Meet Remotely

Governor Whitmer Announces Next Steps for School Reopening in the Fall

Governor Whitmer Signs Executive Order Ensuring Workers' Compensation Eligibility for Frontline COVID-19-Response Workers

Michigan jobless rate remains high in May despite initial rebound in payroll jobs

Governor Whitmer Signs Executive Order Extending Protections for Consumers, Grocery Store Employees

Governor Whitmer Praises Supplemental Agreement Negotiated with Legislature to Support COVID-19 Response

Governor Whitmer Extends Executive Order Permitting Early Refills for up to 90-days' Supply of Pharmaceuticals, Relaxing Regulatory Limitations on Pharmacy Operation

COPYRIGHT 2020 STATE OF MICHIGAN