

Dear Mass Fatalities Planning Stakeholder,

As the COVID-19 pandemic progresses, we may unfortunately encounter numbers of deaths which could exceed the capacity of hospitals and funeral homes to manage them normally. As such, it is important for stakeholders to review their local mass fatalities plans and inventory assets (on hand or accessible) to manage this issue.

While the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services stands ready to assist, please note that the Essential Support Function 8 state mass fatalities plan (attached) relies heavily upon local communities to manage unusual numbers of deaths. Limited resources currently exist at the state or even national level to supplement potential local needs. Contact your local health department with resource needs. Hospitals, funeral directors, emergency managers, and other community entities constitute important partners in executing a mass fatalities plan.

What should you do or have accomplished at this time:

- Know your own facility's, system's, or agency's mass fatalities plan. Review it. Understand your responsibilities in the plan.
- Know your community's mass fatalities plan. Review it. Understand your responsibilities in the plan.
- Know who your collaborating stakeholders are and contact them.
- Understand how, and by whom, additional assets will be acquired, deployed, staffed and managed.
- Some plan aspects include: what conditions require plan activation, security, transportation, media, command structure (Incident Command System usually), behavioral and mental health support.
- Ultimately, be sure processes to support expansion of decedent care will ensure respectful and competent care of the deceased and their families.

Resources are available online from a number of states. Please note that Nebraska state laws and Coroner's System may conflict with some aspects of these plans. The Lincoln Lancaster County Mass Fatalities Plan is attached, and represents a good, Nebraska-based plan.

Feel free to reply to me with questions/comments. I'm a former Chief Medical Officer for the state. I'm also a pathologist and have a background in mass fatalities planning, and I'm here to be a resource and provide assistance.

Sincerely,

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