



NEWS RELEASE

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

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Emergency Order requires funeral homes, doctors to report COVID-19 deaths more quickly

Rapid notice can slow spread of coronavirus

LANSING, MICH. COVID-19 deaths will be reported by physicians and funeral homes more quickly under an emergency order issued today by Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Director Robert Gordon that will improve the state's response to slowing the spread of the virus.

The order, effective immediately, gets important death information to public health officials so they can better provide health services and enforce health laws.

"MDHHS is committed to protecting the public health during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is why I am issuing this emergency order," Gordon said. "To inform sound decision-making and protect Michiganders, public health officials need accurate information about COVID-19 deaths as quickly as possible. I appreciate the work of our funeral home directors and physicians right now, and I am grateful to partner with them in taking quick action during this pandemic."

The order requires physicians who know or suspect that a patient's death resulted from COVID-19 to try to promptly notify the funeral director. The funeral director is then required to initiate the death record and submit to the attending physician within 24 hours of becoming aware that the death resulted or is suspected to have resulted from COVID-19. The funeral director must then file the death record with the local registrar of the district where the death occurred within 48 hours of becoming aware the death resulted or was suspected to have resulted from COVID-19. Funeral directors also must report all deaths using Michigan's [Electronic Death Records System](#).

Physicians who receive a death record for medical certification where the death resulted or is suspected to have resulted from COVID-19 must attempt to certify the death record within 24 hours of receipt.

MDHHS strongly encourages physicians – particularly medical examiners and hospitalists – to use the Electronic Death Records System to certify death records.

Speedy reporting of COVID-19 deaths allows public health officials to more accurately understand the impact of the disease in the community and informs plans for further public health measures.

As of Saturday, April 4, Michigan had recorded 14,225 cases of COVID-19 with 540 deaths.

The emergency rule is being issued under [MCL 333.2253](#), which provides for the MDHHS director to issue orders to control an epidemic.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](#) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](#).

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