March 26, 2020

RE: Temporary permit for out-of-state Funeral Directors and Embalmers regarding COVID-19

On March 24, 2020, Governor J. Kevin Stitt issued his Fourth Amended Executive Order 2020-07, confirming that as of that date there were 109 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the State of Oklahoma. The Governor noted that the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention has identified the potential public health threat posed by COVID-19 as “high” both globally and in the United States. In addition, on March 14, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national health emergency in the United States as a result of the national spread of COVID-19.

Two (2) days later, the number of confirmed cases has now more than doubled to 248 cases and 7 deaths, and the cases have expanded from 19 counties in Oklahoma to 33 counties. It is anticipated that the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths will continue to increase exponentially and expand throughout the State. The State of Oklahoma has a finite number of licensed funeral directors and embalmers.

Pursuant to Title 59 O.S. Section 396.28, the undersigned Oklahoma Funeral Board Executive Director hereby declares that a catastrophic event is taking place in Oklahoma regarding the deaths related to COVID-19, which deaths are anticipated to impact the funeral service industry and the ability of Oklahoma’s licensed funeral directors and embalmers to provide the needed funeral services. Therefore, pursuant to Title 59 O.S. Section 396.28, the undersigned will consider for the issuance of temporary 30-day permits to practice in Oklahoma applications from funeral directors and embalmers licensed and in good standing in other States. To inquire about a temporary permit please email chris.ferguson@funeral.ok.gov.

Chris Ferguson, Executive Director