

Public Health
277 Victoria Street
5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5B 1W2

Tel: 416-392-7405
Fax: 416-392-0713
Michael.Finkelstein@toronto.ca

March 30, 2020

Dear Faith Community Leaders;

Re: Further guidance on recommendation for funerals and burials

As follow up to my letter of March 28, 2020, I am writing to provide further guidance on funerals and burials as we appreciate this is a key area of concern for your communities.

On March 28, 2020, the Ontario Government announced a new emergency order under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* to prohibit organized public events and social gatherings of more than five people, effective immediately.

However, under this order, **funerals are permitted to proceed with up to 10 people at one time**. Organizers should ensure that measures are in place to reduce risk, including providing hand washing stations or alcohol-based hand sanitizer, spacing seating to ensure physical distancing, and encouraging outdoor services, if possible. In addition, people should not to attend any gatherings if they have symptoms such as fever, cough or difficulty breathing.

We are aware that some faith communities are pursuing alternatives such as virtual services and online dedications, and while attending to burials now, they are postponing memorial services to a future date. We encourage you to explore these and other options to meet the needs of your community while also reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19.

I hope that this guidance is helpful. If you have any further questions, please email us at publichealth@toronto.ca.

Sincerely,



Dr. Michael Finkelstein (for Dr. Eileen de Villa)
Acting Director, Communicable Disease Control, and
Associate Medical Officer of Health