10 Ways Care Facility Staff Can Support Home Funeral Families

When a loved one dies in a care facility, it is common practice to contact a funeral director immediately. The need to fill the bed, to avoid disturbing other residents, the fact that many family members may take a considerable amount of time to arrive all add up to this practical solution. But this doesn't preclude the possibility for families to conduct the care they choose.

More families are expressing interest in handling at least some of the after-death details, including bringing the body home or to another facility to bathe and dress, have visitors stop by, or plan a ceremony or funeral observance. They may or may not choose to hire a professional. Help in making that dream a reality lies with caring facility staff.

Here's how care facility staff can help:

1) Ensure that your body release policy and other pertinent policies are in compliance with the laws in your state regarding the right of next-of-kin to take custody and control of the body, even in states that require hiring a funeral director for some aspect of care

2) Create facility policy that is easy to follow and that lays out the procedure for removal and release to the family

3) Ask families what their funeral plans are during admission, rather than asking what funeral home to call

4) Offer information about home funeral options and resources and explain how your facility manages the details

5) Assist in completing appropriate paperwork in a timely manner so the next-of-kin will be able to meet time requirements for removal

6) Offer information about reliable removal services or home funeral-friendly funeral directors willing to file paperwork and transport to the home for a reasonable fee

7) Assist next-of-kin in getting the death certificate signed by the doctor responsible

8) Assist with body care, if invited

9) Recognize the family's legal right to have a home funeral throughout the experience

10) Demonstrate confidence in the family to care for their own dead

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www.homefuneralalliance.org