March XX, 2020

The Honorable Larry Hogan

National Governors Association

444 N. Capitol Street N.W., Suite 267

Washington, D.C. 20001

**Re: Time-sensitive request for PPE for deathcare professionals**

Dear Governor Hogan:

The National Funeral Directors Association is the world’s leading and largest funeral service association representing 20,000 funeral directors and 11,000 funeral homes. During a pandemic or any mass-fatality disaster, it can be hard to contemplate the sad inevitability that there will be mass-fatalities, but deathcare represents a critical part of the public/private partnership that helps states heal and recover. **Deathcare professionals serve on the frontlines.**

**While deathcare professionals stand ready to provide meaningful assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic by caring for the dead and their grieving families, they cannot do so safely without personal protective equipment (PPE).** We have heard from members in “hot spots” experiencing high rates of death that they will run out of PPE in as soon as seven days, sooner if the death rate continues to escalate.

Deathcare professionals are at high-risk for exposure to COVID-19 as they care for and prepare decedents for burial or cremation. And, it’s not just the deathcare professional who is at-risk. For example, if a funeral director were to become infected, he or she could unknowingly become a source of community spread as they interact with staff in their funeral home, their own family and others in the community in which they work.

The Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) issued guidance on March 19 (and updated guidance on March 28) that classified mortuary workers as “critical infrastructure workers.” *In fact, mortuary workers were put into the “Healthcare and Public Health” category alongside other frontline caregivers like doctors and nurses.*

**We recognize PPE supplies are extremely limited at this time. However, we ask that as governors determine priorities for allocating PPE, they include deathcare professionals among the priority groups for receiving these vital supplies. Doing so protects the health, not only of deathcare professionals, but the entire community in which they work.**

On behalf of our members and the more than 141,000 deathcare professionals in our country, we are grateful for the leadership of our nation’s governors and stand ready, as always, to care for the dead and the families left behind.

Sincerely,



Christine Pepper, MBA, CAE

Chief Executive Officer