



# Modify Mortuary Science Regulations

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
State Government Special Rev				
Expenditures	(6)	(4)	(4)	(2)
Revenues	(6)	(4)	(4)	(2)
Net Fiscal Impact	0	0	0	0

## Summary

The proposal better tailors regulation of the funeral care industry in two ways. The first distinguishes alkaline hydrolysis (AH) facilities from crematories, and establishes a fee for licensing AH facilities. The second allows funeral home branch establishments to operate without an embalming and preparation room provided all preparation is done at a central licensed location.

## Background

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) licenses funeral homes and crematories. The rate of cremation as final disposition now exceeds 50 percent in Minnesota. Since 2003 alkaline hydrolysis facilities have been licensed under the statutory definition of a crematory. Minnesota has two licensed AH facilities: one at Mayo Clinic, and is used for final disposition in the anatomy bequest program, and one owned and operated at a private funeral home.

Concerns about the environment and other issues have expanded the interest in alternatives to cremation. As interest grows in this alternative to burial or cremation, it is necessary for the state to address the requirements that are unique for this process in order to ensure the safety of operators

and the public. A stakeholder workgroup including representatives from the Minnesota Funeral Directors Association, Mayo Clinic, the University of Minnesota Mortuary Science program, the University of Minnesota Veterinary School, the Metropolitan Council, individual funeral homes, and the public met to discuss the appropriate standards for AH.

## Proposal

MDH and the workgroup developed licensing requirements for AH facilities; those recommendations are contained in the proposal. It is unlikely AH licensing will provide a net change in fee revenues since the fee amounts for AH facilities will be the same as the fees for crematories. However, it will allow clarity in tracking the fees from AH rather than blending them with crematory fees. Separate licensing will also clarify in statute those requirements which are the same or similar to requirements of crematories, and those requirements which are different.

Additionally, MDH has determined some funeral home licensing requirements may be eased without harm to the public. Specifically, the requirement that a funeral home contain an embalming and

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preparatory room is removed provided all preparation is done at a central licensed location.

It is estimated elimination of the prep room requirement under certain circumstances may increase the total number of funeral home establishments by 12 per year. The fees for licensing funeral homes will remain the same, with or without a prep room.

### **Rationale**

Consumers and the public rely on the state to ensure there are adequate standards in place and corresponding state agency oversight of those standards. AH standards directly affect not only the consumers of those services, but also the workers at the facilities and the public living near the facility. AH is becoming more widely accepted, and it is important to have legislation that regulates this newer aspect of the funeral services industry. The proposal lessening the physical plant requirements of all branch funeral offices may allow consumers more choices of services around Minnesota.

### **For more information:**

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