

# Mass Fatality Planning

## Assumptions

- Approximately 75,000 deaths occurred in North Carolina in 2004
- During a six to eight week wave of pandemic influenza, North Carolina could experience approximately 5600 deaths due to influenza
- There are approximately 732 funeral service firms and 72 crematories in North Carolina
- An autopsy is not required to confirm influenza as the cause of death; however, autopsies may be performed early in the pandemic to confirm the presence of pandemic influenza in North Carolina
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## Roles and Responsibilities of Key Stakeholders

### NC Division of Public Health (NC DPH)

#### **Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME)**

- In collaboration with the General Communicable Disease Control branch, determine which, if any, cases will be considered medical examiner cases
  - Early in the pandemic when establishing the presence of pandemic influenza in North Carolina
- Provide subject matter expertise on planning for and handling a mass fatality situation to key partners
  - Application of Mass Fatality Plan drafted by the OCME to healthcare facilities

#### **Which branch / section / or is this DFS responsibility??**

- Assess current capacity for refrigeration of deceased persons
  - Poll hospitals regarding morgue space at facility
  - Contact medical schools to identify additional storage areas

#### **Vital Records**

- Anything to add from meeting with Glenn Cutler???

### North Carolina Board of Funeral Service (NCBFS)

- Review licensure process with NSBFS' legal counsel to facilitate rapid licensure for surge capacity in a pandemic
  - Re-activation of inactive licensees
  - Temporary licensing of trainees / students to assist with mortuary services during a pandemic
- Identify essential personnel involved in mortuary service (Vaccine Priority Group Tier 3) who would receive pandemic influenza vaccine once it became available
  - 2500 NCBFS licensees (active and inactive)

- 100 trainees
- 150 crematory personnel (72 crematoriums; approximately 2 personnel per crematory)
- Communication with NCBFS licensees
  - Via list serve
  - Bimonthly newsletter
    - NC DPH will write an article about pandemic influenza for this NCBFS newsletter

### **North Carolina Funeral Directors Association (NCFDA)**

- Assist in the coordination of mortuary services
  - Transportation, preparation and disposition of deceased persons
  - Acquisition of funeral supplies
  - Provide clergy support
  - Provide family support
- Assist in communication with key partners
  - Provide education and updates on pandemic influenza to members of NCFDA (280 funeral service firms) by urgent fax broadcast and email
  - Provide Hispanic Funeral consultation
  - Serve as a clearinghouse for mortuary concerns

### **North Carolina Funeral Directors and Morticians**

- Provide education and updates on pandemic influenza to members of NCFDM (approximately 100 funeral service firms)