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PROVINCE OF SULTAN KUDARAT  
**OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR**

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## EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 26

Series of 2020

### AN ORDER PROVIDING GUIDELINES FOR INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL FOR THE SAFE MANAGEMENT OF A DEAD BODY IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID 19

**WHEREAS**, the maintenance of peace and order, the protection of life, liberty, and property, and promotion of the general welfare are essential for the enjoyment by all the people of the blessings of democracy;

**WHEREAS**, on March 24, 2020, the World Health Organization has issued interim guidance entitled "Infection Prevention and Control for the Safe Management of a Dead Body in the Context of COVID-19";

**WHEREAS**, on March 27, 2020, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) has issued Memorandum Circular No. 2020-063 entitled "Interim Guidelines on the Management of Human Remains for Patient Under Investigation (PUI) and Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Cases";

**WHEREAS**, people may die of COVID-19 in the health care facilities, home or in other locations if no precaution shall be implemented. Transmission of infectious diseases associated with management of dead bodies can occur and can be aggravated by non-compliance to universal, standard and transmission-based precautions, especially in healthcare settings;

**WHEREAS**, the safety and well-being of everyone who tends to bodies should be LGUs' priority;

**WHEREAS**, the dignity of the dead, their cultural and religious traditions, and their families should be respected and protected throughout;

**WHEREAS**, for the general welfare of our people, there is a need to adopt the interim guidance of WHO and DILG for all those, including managers of health care facilities and mortuaries, religious and public health authorities, and families, who tend to the bodies of persons who have died of suspected or confirmed COVID-19;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, SUHARTO T. MANGUDADATU, Ph.D. Provincial Governor of Sultan Kudarat**, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby **ORDER** the prevention, control and safe management of dead body in the context of COVID 19 in the Province of Sultan Kudarat under the following guidelines:

#### General Guidelines:

1. In handling the remains of confirmed COVID-19 cases and PUIs, universal, standard and transmission-based precautions and DOH-recommended guidelines and procedures must be strictly observed to avoid further spread of the disease;



2. Every local government unit (LGU) shall exercise its powers which are essential for the promotion of the general welfare. Within their respective territorial jurisdiction, every LGU shall ensure, support and promote the health and safety of its inhabitants;
3. The identity and other personal details of the deceased shall be respected at all times and remain confidential, unless otherwise provided by law;
4. The remains of persons who died of dangerous communicable diseases are potentially infectious and standard precautions should be implemented for every case;
5. LGUs within the province of Sultan Kudarat shall:
  - a) designate and commission reputable funeral parlors and crematoriums to handle the remains of confirmed COVID-19 cases and PUIs;
  - b) provide possible financial assistance to cover the logistics, fuel, salary and other expenses that will be incurred in the process which include transfer/transport of human remains;
  - c) monitor and penalize funeral parlors and crematoriums that refuse to provide logistics and transport of COVID-19 or PUI remains, including but not limited to, refusal to pick-up the remains;
  - d) release issuances or ordinances to put a price cap or impose a price freeze on funeral services located within their jurisdiction; and
  - e) ensure funeral companies are to provide transportation and/or housing accommodations for funeral service staff;
6. Funeral services staff and personnel are granted exemptions from the imposed enhanced community quarantine. the said individuals may freely move and travel to ensure that the remains of deceased individuals will be given proper funeral services;
7. All personnel handling the dead body/body parts are required to wear the appropriate PPEs while performing their tasks. All PPEs shall be properly disposed of, preferably burned for disposable and properly disinfected for non-disposable, after its use;
8. Assess the risk prior to the mortuary care process, and provide adequate explanation to the family;
9. Manage each situation on a case-by-case basis, balancing the rights of the family with the risk of exposure to infection;
10. **Funeral wake or vigil for PUIs and confirmed COVID-19 cases who died shall be prohibited. Burial, preferably cremation, shall be done on the following schedules: 1) identified PUIs or PUMs and confirmed COVID-19 cases within 12 hours after death and 2) natural death within 48 hrs. after death.** However, cremation or burial of human remains, to the most possible extent, shall be in accordance with the deceased person's wish, decision of those who have the duty to make funeral/burial arrangements, and religious and culturally-acceptable norms of the deceased;
11. Deaths of foreign nationals shall be immediately reported to the DOH-Bureau of International Health Cooperation (BIHC). The BIHC shall inform the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), which shall thereafter notify the concerned embassy;
12. Information regarding crematoriums and mortuaries contracted for cremation or burial of human remains shall be kept confidential;
13. Shipment of human remains or remains of foreign nationals and locals shall strictly adhere to the guidelines of the Bureau of Quarantine;
14. PNP Crime Laboratory and/or the National Bureau of Investigation shall provide technical assistance on the orientation of funeral workers about universal, standard and transmission-based precautions;
15. No LGU shall prohibit the cremation or burial of PUIs and confirmed COVID-19 cases in a burial ground or memorial park located in his/her area of jurisdiction;
16. All healthcare facilities shall not hamper the release of the human remains of the deceased, even if it is due to non-payment of hospital bills;
17. Special considerations should be given in respect to various religious and cultural practices. LGUs with identified Muslim Cemetery shall not restrict a Muslim who died as a PUI or a confirmed COVID-19 case, as long as the processing and handling of the human remains be in accordance to the universal, standard and transmission based precautions set by this Order;
18. The human remains of a Muslim foreign national who died as a PUI or a confirmed COVID-19 case in the country shall be given decent burial in the nearest cemetery following the appropriate Islamic burial rites, ensuring that the processing and handling shall be in accordance to universal and standard precaution;