



Virginia Funeral Directors Association (VFDA)

NEWSLETTER/LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

March/April 2018

Thanks To Our Patrons for Their Efforts During The 2018 Legislative Session

With the support of our patrons, VFDA successfully took another bite of the EDRS apple in the 2018 Legislative Session. Senator John Cosgrove and Delegate Tony Wilt stepped up and patroned companion bills that would require physicians who care for hospice patients to register and use Virginia's EDRS when those patients pass away.

Senator John Cosgrove patroned SB309 and Delegate Tony Wilt patroned HB1158. Once each of these bills passed both Houses and was on the Governor's desk, VFDA received a request to amend by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). Concerns over recent Virginia resident deaths occurring out-of-state prompted Debbie Condrey of VDH to request that our patrons and VFDA support amendments correcting the issue. After working through the request with our patrons, a representative of Governor Northam's office and VDH, the request was accommodated.



The Honorable John A. Cosgrove, Jr.
P. O. Box 15483
Chesapeake, VA 23328
(757) 547 – 3422
District14@Senate.Virginia.Gov

Senator Cosgrove (Legislative Aide: Christie New Craig)



The Honorable Tony O. Wilt
P. O. Box 1425
Harrisonburg, VA 22803
(540) 208 – 0735
DelTWilt@House.Virginia.Gov

Delegate Wilt (Legislative Aide: Chad Funkhouser)

Please reach out to our patrons and their amazing Legislative Aides to let them all know how much we appreciate their willingness to support VFDA efforts and their hard work on behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia!

Introduced Bills Supported, Monitored and Opposed by VFDA

VFDA had a very successful General Assembly session with our proactive efforts, but there is often legislation that is introduced that we monitor, must improve upon, support or oppose. This year was no exception and the following is legislation followed through the 2018 Legislative Session:

Senator Jennifer McClellan (SB357) and Delegate Chris Head (HB315) each had legislation related to EDRS. Senator McClellan's bill required a full mandate of the use of EDRS. Delegate Head's bill attempted to create an "opt-out" process that would require a physician to specifically opt out of an EDRS requirement. It was very creative and VFDA appreciates Delegate Head's efforts to require full use of EDRS.

VFDA has tried to execute full mandate in the past, and met with fierce opposition from physician organizations such as MSV. For that reason, VFDA's strategy has been to work with those organizations and incrementally bring on the physicians who have the highest need to register and use EDRS.

Senator Lionell Spruill patroned two bills, SB143 on mortuary science that required students to gain practical experience during their education process; and SB881, which increased the number of members appointed to the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers. VFDA supported SB143; however, we opposed SB881 and we asked Senator Spruill to strike SB881, which he ultimately did.

Senator Bryce Reeves patroned SB831 requiring funeral homes to accept third party caskets. With an amendment that brought such activity into compliance with federal regulations, VFDA supported.

Senator Ryan McDougle patroned SB959, Disposition of unclaimed dead body, final orders of transportation and disposition. VFDA monitored.

Helpful Information

Virginia Funeral Directors Association: <http://www.vfda.net/>

Who's My Legislator: <http://whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov/>

VFDA Still Has Work To Do in 2018

EDRS: There is still work to do on EDRS going into the rest of the year. In the negotiation with VDH and the Governor's office on the amendments to be applied to SB309 and HB1158, VFDA lobbyists, Angie Bezik and Julia Hammond, were able to move forward some delayed discussions important to VFDA and the funeral services profession going forward.

They were able to secure commitment from VDH that the EDRS Stakeholders Workgroup meetings will be reconvened. Additionally, they were able to get VDH commitment that they would include on the agenda further discussion of how out-of-state deaths could more easily be handled (as well as finding out how other states handle that with Virginia-occurring deaths of out-of-state residents).

Additionally, VDH agreed to include discussion on integration of EDRS and the mandated Electronic Health Records, which physicians are currently required to use. This is an important piece of moving EDRS mandate forward as the Medical Society of Virginia has indicated in a letter to Senator McClellan that it would be the important piece in garnering their support of an EDRS mandate. Angie and Julia have brought that information to the attention of the Governor's office as well, and will continue to keep his staff apprised of information relating to the EDRS Stakeholders Workgroups and the issues to be discussed there.

Julia and Angie feel strongly that the workgroup needs to look at which physicians truly need to be registered on EDRS. There are many more licensed physicians in Virginia than the number who actually practice medicine. In order to appropriately determine what a mandate should look like numbers-wise, we need to work closely with VDH, DVR, and physicians' organizations to determine that accurately.

The 2019 Legislative Session is just around the corner!

Prefiling of legislation will begin on July 16, 2018. That is only four months away!

Julia and Angie will work closely with VFDA leadership to vet and prepare legislation for 2019. Much of that will likely be determined as the EDRS Stakeholders Workgroup meetings progress and VFDA members make their concerns known to the Legislative Committee Chairs.

It is recommended that we also reach out to our counterparts at VMA and IFHA, as well as MSV and other physician organizations as we move through the vetting process. VDH and OCME should also be considered for outreach.

OTHER WORK TO BE DONE

VFDA isn't alone in the "Work-Left-To-Do" Category – The General Assembly still has work to do, too. Although the General Assembly Adjourned Sine Die on March 10, they did so without adopting a budget. The sticking point between the Senate and the House was Medicaid expansion.

Governor Northam has called for a "Special Session" to begin on April 11, 2018. The Reconvene Session – or Veto Session – will still be April 18.

Why is the budget so important to VFDA? The budget is where state government including VDH, DVR, OCME, colleges and universities, localities and K-12 are allocated funding for the next two years.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

June 10 – 13, 2018
130th Annual VFDA
Convention

The Boar's Head Inn
Charlottesville, VA

Virginia Funeral Directors of Virginia Newsletter



Member Name
Address
City, State, ZIP