

Bereavement & Resource Guide



University Medical Center New Orleans
2000 Canal St.
New Orleans, LA
umcno.org

19-1003-0319

University 
Medical Center
New Orleans
LCMC Health

Important telephone numbers and services

University Medical Center

Main switchboard	504.702.3000
Pastoral Care	504.702.3064
Social Services/Case Management	504.702.4114
Medical Records Requests	504.702.2079
Patient Experience	504.702.3600
Hospital Public Safety (for valuables)	504.702.3108
Release of Information	504.702.2082

Coroner's Offices

Orleans Parish Coroner's Office	504.658.9660
Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office	504.365.9100
St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office	985.781.1150

Grief and Trauma Support Services/Groups

Children's Bureau of New Orleans	504.525.2366
Compassionate Friends	877.969.0010
NO/AIDS Task Force (For survivors of those who have died of AIDS)	504.821.2601
Akula Foundation Grief Resource Center	504.723.3628

Other Resources

Veterans Affairs Benefits	800.827.1000
On the Internet	webhealing.org griefnet.org

Contacting the funeral home and transporting your loved one

You will need to contact a funeral home of your choice as soon as possible. If you need help, please ask our staff how they might assist you—we are prepared to help in any way we can.

Your loved one's body will be released as soon as possible to the funeral home of choice. We have processes in place to safely guarantee the release to your specified funeral home of choice. In most cases, the body will be released to the funeral home the following morning after 10 am unless an autopsy is to be performed, in which case release is usually later that day. We are unable to store your loved one's remains for a long period of time, so please make arrangements as soon as possible. After 30 days, or if our facility is at capacity, the patient's remains will be moved to the coroner's office, and you will need to make arrangements directly with the coroner's office after that time.

When contacting the funeral home, you will need to have your deceased loved one's full name, date of birth, and Social Security number readily available. The funeral home will often require a deposit before they will accept your loved one's body.

Make an appointment with the funeral director to discuss and finalize funeral arrangements and their services. The funeral director is a trained professional who will assist and advise you in many areas, such as types of caskets, clothes for your loved one to be buried in, cremation, etc. The funeral director will contact your cemetery and can notify the newspaper to publish an obituary, if your family desires.

Obtaining a death certificate

Once your loved one's body is picked up by your chosen funeral home, the funeral home will enter the necessary information into a Louisiana database and create the death certificate. This process may take several days to fully complete. Certified copies of the death certificate are obtained from the funeral director. It is advisable that you order multiple copies to be used for legal purposes (Social Security benefits, life insurance, Veterans Affairs benefits, etc.). We suggest you obtain at least 10–15 copies to make sure you have enough for every need that might arise. The charge will be included in the burial costs.

Other reminders/information

Grief and bereavement can be complicated by the seemingly endless number of tasks you need to perform. The immediate days following a loved one's death will be focused on the funeral or memorial services. Afterwards, there are various financial and legal issues that also need to be dealt with.

Every situation is different, but here are some general guidelines of tasks we've compiled that may need to be addressed:

- **Employer:** If your loved one was working, you should notify his or her employer and ask about any benefits, such as pension plans, or pay due, including vacation or sick time
- **Social Security:** Notify your local Social Security office of the death. If your loved one was covered, the spouse or dependents may be eligible for certain benefits
- **Health insurer:** Contact the health insurance company or employer regarding terminating coverage for the deceased while continuing coverage for others who may be on the policy
- **Life insurance:** Contact the agent or company to ask how to file a claim. Usually, the beneficiary will need to complete claim forms and related paperwork. If the deceased is listed as a beneficiary on any other policy, arrange to have their name removed
- **Accounts:** Arrange to change any joint bank accounts into your name. Make sure important bills, such as mortgage payments, continue to be paid
- **Tax return:** Seek the advice of an accountant or tax advisor about filing the deceased's tax return for the year of the death

If your loved one was a veteran, you may be able to get assistance with the funeral and burial plot, and you may be eligible for other benefits. For information on benefits, call the office of Veterans Affairs at 800.827.1000.

Grief therapy and bereavement support groups

No matter how loving and supportive your family members and friends may be, you may desire or require additional grief support. Those who travel the path of grief can be helped immensely through various support groups. There are support groups locally and on the internet to assist you with the grief process over the loss of your loved one.

There are many support groups on the internet, including groups for suicide survivors, loss of a spouse, loss of a parent, loss of a child, and loss of a sibling. Sharing your thoughts and feelings with others, expressing your grief, or simply reading about and digesting other's experiences can often bring you some comfort. We encourage you to seek out grief support groups or bereavement support groups in your area or on the internet—you don't have to grieve alone.

One of the resources available free of charge in the New Orleans metro area is the Grief Resource Center through Canon Hospice, sponsored by the Akula Foundation. The center can be reached by calling 504.723.3628 or 504.881.0452.

Our staff is truly sorry for your loss. Please let any hospital staff member know how we can serve you better during your time of need.