



Funeral Board of Manitoba Conseil des services funéraires du Manitoba

April 25, 2014

Funeral Board of Manitoba Licensees

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Funeral Board of Manitoba received a copy of the Manitoba Funeral Services Association's March 31, 2014 letter to its membership identifying concerns that it perceives affect the profession. Two of these concerns relate to the Board, to which it feels the need to respond.

Education of funeral students

Until it approved Red River College last year, the Board had not approved a school since 2007. Red River College has an active student complement and a waiting list of potential students. College graduates may start to practice as early as 2015.

The Funeral Directors and Embalmers Act regulation was amended to include a transition clause which allowed students enrolled at the Canadian College of Funeral Services to complete their studies and be eligible for licensing if they completed their studies by June 2013. As such, 2014 was the only year without graduates in Manitoba.

The Board and Red River College have reiterated to the Association's President on several occasions that Red River College is prepared to provide a full time accelerated program if there is enough demand by students and if the profession is in need of more graduates. However, to date, no funeral home has advised of any shortage of funeral directors, or asked for an accelerated program. Manitoba has over 200 funeral directors/embalmers for 10,000 annual deaths. The Association's Executive was heavily involved in the development of the program and continues to participate in ongoing meetings regarding course content.

***The Prearranged Funeral Services Act* regulation**

The Funeral Board of Manitoba met with the Manitoba Funeral Services Association's Executive in July 2013 to review *The Prearranged Funeral Services Act* draft regulation and discuss possible solutions for Board funding. The Board has

moved forward with the changes to the draft which is now complete. The Board hopes to review the draft with the Minister shortly. The Board has also advised the Association's President that it will be distributed to the profession for comment after the Minister has reviewed it. It is important to remember that a regulation is intended to expand on what is in the Act – it does not create anything new. If you wish to prepare for reviewing the regulation, you can read *The Grieving Family Protection Act* at www.gov.mb.ca.

In doing so, you will note that there is no provision for an assurance fund for misuse of trust payments. This was because it was thought that the 17 funeral homes that currently offer prearranged funeral trust plans could not afford massive annual payments to establish a significant assurance fund; and that funeral homes that provide only insurance based prepaid funds should not be asked to fund a risk that they do not take. Rather, to protect client funds, the Act states that trust payments will be made directly to the trust company.

The Funeral Board of Manitoba respects and supports the profession by providing thoughtful oversight and licensure, both of the profession and the education of prospective students.

We trust the above provides you with the information you need.

Sincerely,



Susan Boulter
Chair



Darin Hoffman
Co-Chair