

# Funeral Planning Topics

## Arrangements desired

Cremation?

Burial?

Donation of body to a medical organization?

Ceremony before final disposition, or later, or not at all?

What sort of ceremony? Religious, secular, joyful celebration of a life?

## Funeral services and goods desired

Simple arrangements, or with optional extras?

Funeral home to be involved in ceremony, or not?

Burial plot?

Natural burial or conventional burial?

Type of casket or container

Burial accessories (outer receptacle, urn, etc.)

Monument?

## Acceptable price range

Average cost of a funeral in the USA is over \$7000 plus any cemetery expenses. The total is often more than \$11,000, but most expenses can be minimized or avoided.

Getting price data. Prices vary from one funeral business to another. The FCA of the Finger Lakes has price data. You can also get data by visiting funeral homes and obtaining their general price lists.

## Is your family informed of your plan and comfortable with it?

Have you spoken with them in person?

Have you informed them where to find important records?

## Set aside funds to pay funeral expenses.

Pay-on-death account in a bank -- can be any amount, but it is available to creditors or Medicaid.

Burial fund in a bank -- up to \$1500 is not available to creditors or Medicaid.

Irrevocable trust that can only be used for funeral expenses -- can be any amount, and is not available to creditors or Medicaid.

Life insurance. Pay for a policy that will be owned by the person who will pay your funeral bill.

Agreement with family that one of them will pay for the funeral and recoup expenses from the estate.

Pre-pay a funeral home?

Prepayment makes sense in circumstances where:

a person expects to reside in the same area permanently.

a person expects to qualify for Medicaid.

a person has no relative or friend who will be responsible for the funeral arrangements.

Money prepaid to a funeral home in New York State is protected under state laws and regulations, but the arrangement may be troublesome if:

the person moves to another city or state.

the person dies in another state or country.

the funds do not fully cover the expenses.

the funeral home goes out of business.

Prepared by *Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Finger Lakes, Inc.*

www.imsfca.org Email: info@imsfca.org (607) 273-8316

February 2009