

# **Call to Action**

## **Electronic Death Registration System**

**The EDRS in your state may inadvertantly be preventing families from caring for their own dead by denying them access to death certificates and burial transit permits.**

This new system allows state and town officials (medical examiners, doctors, hospitals, nursing homes, hospices, funeral directors, town clerks) to file death certificates directly into an electronic system. Unless specifically written these new regulations may effectively deny families access to a paper death certificate and burial transit permit.

The EDRS is already set up in most states. The system as a whole did not take into account the needs of a family wanting to care for their loved ones after death without the involvement of a funeral director. In 9 states restrictive laws already exist. In the other 41 states where it is legal for families to care for their own dead a new regulation like the EDRS cannot supercede the families' rights. However, if not explicitly written into the regulations families may be turned away at government institutions and by officials/doctors/medical examiners/hospitals/nursing homes etc. who are completely unaware of the existing laws which protect families' rights.

We as advocates for a family's right to choose need to:

- research how the system works in our individual states (google Electronic Death Registration System in your state)

If the language to protect a families' right to care for their own is not explicit we should:

- contact our state senators and representatives, educate them about family-directed after death care and how the EDRS may have unintended consequences which prevent family members from caring for their loved ones after death.

- ask these legislators to call the appropriate officials in EDRS, Vital Statistics and Dept. of Health and Human Services (names may be different

in your state) and ask for clarification of the policy for allowing families to receive a paper death certificate and burial permit.

We should insist that clarifying language be added to the EDRS as well as any Department of Public Health description of after death care on their website. Here is a link to the Vermont Dept. of Health and Human Services with the clear language that is needed.

<http://healthvermont.gov/vadr/burial/home.aspx>

As you prepare to meet with your legislators please go to the legislative page of the NHFA website [www.homefuneralalliance.org](http://www.homefuneralalliance.org) or the Funeral Consumers Alliance website [www.funerals.org](http://www.funerals.org) Both sites have a step-by-step description of how to approach your legislators to ensure the best outcome of your meeting.