



Oregon Mortuary & Cemetery Board (OMCB)

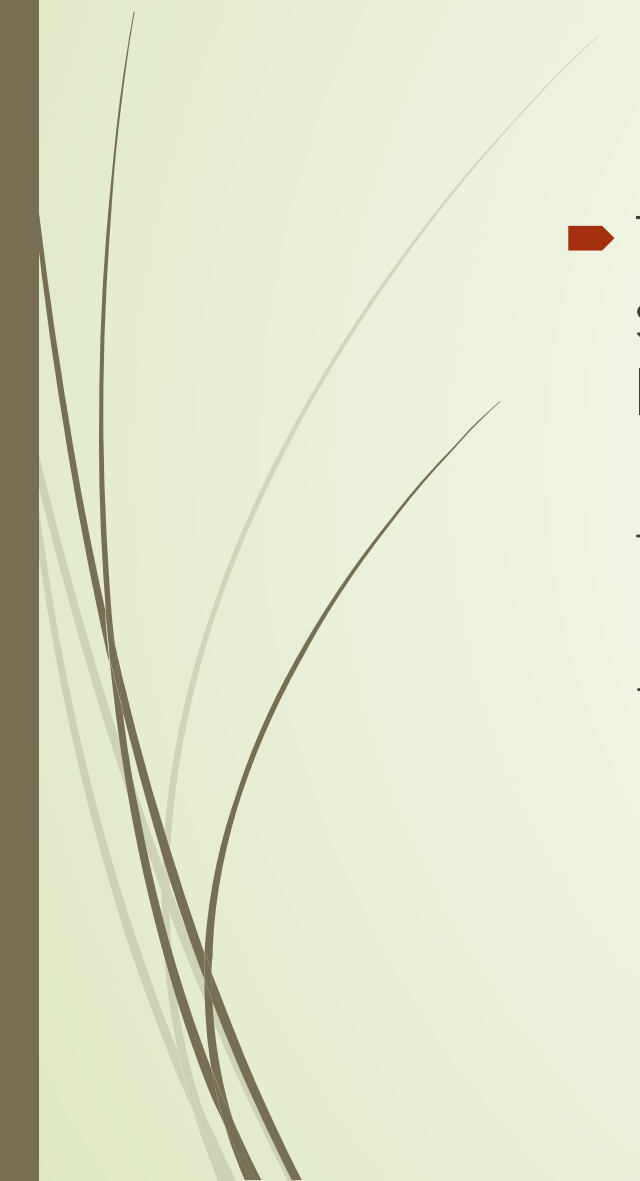
HB5022 Testimony: 2019-2021 Budget Request
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Education

January 30, 2019

Senator Lew Frederick, Co-Chair
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair



OMCB's Mission Statement

- ▶ The mission of the Board is to protect public health, safety and welfare by fairly and efficiently performing its licensing, inspection and enforcement duties; by promoting professional behavior and standards in all facets of the Oregon death care industry; and, by maintaining constructive relationships with licensees, those they serve and others with an interest in the Board's activities.
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Who Does OMCB License?

- ▶ The Board licenses both death care professionals and facilities.
 - ▶ Individual licenses include funeral service practitioners (funeral directors), embalmers, apprentices, interns, preneed salespeople & death care consultants.
 - ▶ Facilities include funeral establishments (funeral homes), crematories, cemeteries & immediate disposition companies.
- ▶ The Board also administers a funeral service practitioner (FSP) and death care consultant (DCC) exams at least twice each year.

Current Licensee Numbers

Type of License	Sep 27 2018	Jan 2 2019	Change from Sep - Jan	Trend
Death Care Consultants	0	0	0	—
EM Apprentices *	58	41	(17)	▼
FSP Apprentices *	68	44	(24)	▼
Interns	8	9	1	▲
Embalmer Only *	19	18	(1)	▼
FSP Only *	170	171	1	▲
Combination License: EM *	379	382	3	▲
Combination License: FSP *	379	382	3	▲
Military Combination License: EM	0	0	0	—
Military Combination License: FSP	0	0	0	—
Preneed Salespeople **	149	166	17	▲
Funeral Establishments	193	134	(59)	▼
Immediate Disposition Companies	7	6	(1)	▼
Crematoriums	65	48	(17)	▼
Cemeteries, Operating	304	207	(97)	▼
Cemeteries, Operating, Municipal	37	35	(2)	▼
Cemeteries, Operating, County	7	6	(1)	▼
Cemeteries, Operating, Special District	133	98	(35)	▼
Cemeteries, Registered Non-Operating	48	48	0	—
Removal Registrations	30	30	0	—
Alternative Disposition Facilities	2	2	0	—
Combined Total of all Licenses, Registrations:	2056	1827	(229)	▼*

- ***Note:** All facility and apprenticeship licenses expired January 1, 2019 – not all renewals have been processed.



Trends that are Changing Death Care Traditions in Oregon and Beyond



Trends that are Changing Death Care Traditions: Affordable Cremation

- ▶ The Demand for Affordable Cremation:
 - ▶ According to the **Cremation Association of North America (CANA)**, the cremation rate increased nationally from **43.3%** in 2012 to **51.6%** in 2017, resulting in an **8.3%** increase.
 - ▶ In 2016, Oregon ranked as the nation's third highest percentage of cremation (**75.8%**). Only Washington (**77.3%**) and Nevada (**76.9%**) had higher percentages.
 - ▶ CANA reports that in 2017, the US cremation rate was **51.6%** & projects the rate to reach **57.8%** by 2022.

(Taken from: <https://www.cremationassociation.org/page/IndustryStatistics>)



Trends that are Changing Death Care Traditions: Eco-Friendlier Alternatives

► An Interest in Eco-Friendlier Funeral Alternatives:

- **Green (Natural) Burial** and **Alkaline Hydrolysis** are two alternatives for those who are interested in minimizing the environmental impact of their final disposition.


- **Green burial** is described by the **Green Burial Council** as:

Green, or natural burial is a way of caring for the dead with minimal environmental impact that aids in the conservation of natural resources, reduction of carbon emissions, protection of worker health, and the restoration and/or preservation of habitat. Green burial necessitates the use of non-toxic and biodegradable materials, such as caskets, shrouds, and urns. (<https://greenburialcouncil.org/home/what-is-green-burial/>)

- **Alkaline Hydrolysis** is described by **CANA** as:


Alkaline hydrolysis uses water, alkaline chemicals, heat, and sometimes pressure and agitation, to accelerate natural decomposition, leaving bone fragments and a neutral liquid called effluent. The decomposition that occurs in alkaline hydrolysis is the same as that which occurs during burial, just sped up dramatically by the chemicals. The effluent is sterile, and contains salts, sugars, amino acids and peptides. There is no tissue and no DNA left after the process completes. This effluent is discharged with all other wastewater, and is a welcome addition to the water systems.

(<https://www.cremationassociation.org/page/alkalinehydrolysis>)



Trends that are Changing Death Care Traditions: Moving Away from Convention

- ▶ **Moving Away from Conventional Tradition/Rituals & Replacing with Personalization:**
 - ▶ Society is changing, which has included changes in attitude towards life and death.
 - ▶ Many families have abandoned the traditional somber funeral rituals and have replaced them with celebrations of life, which often rejects traditional funeral services.
 - ▶ The trend for personalization often replaces traditional funeral services, which means that traditional funeral homes are having to adapt to new demands and expectations.
 - ▶ Family-led funerals are also becoming more common, and oftentimes funeral directors are not included at any point during the process.
 - ▶ Oregon allows for an individual to act as a funeral service practitioner – as long as the person is not compensated.



Working Towards Effective Implementation of New IT Support

- ▶ After many years of support, our IT provider has recently terminated his contract.
- ▶ We are currently in the procurement process to identify an appropriate vendor for database transition and management.
- ▶ The Governor's Recommended Budget includes this package, which takes into account the substantial "start-up" costs necessary for software and database support – compared to the previous IT provider.



2017- 2019 Key Accomplishments

- Successfully transitioned the Indigent Disposition Program to OMCB from the Public Health Division (Oregon Health Authority). (*HB 3243, 2015 Session*)
- Broadened board member requirements to more accurately represent Oregon's current population. (*HB 2317, 2017 Session*)
- Collaborated with the Oregon Funeral Directors Association (OFDA) & Chief Sponsors Rep. Sprenger, Power & Reschke to allow unlicensed cemeteries to perform interments under very specific circumstances. (*HB 4073, 2018 Session*)
- After recent fluctuation in OMCB management, a new Executive Director was hired in August of 2018.
- Although a fairly-high profile situation has greatly affected our office for a number of years and reduced our ability to complete "normal" tasks, we are hopeful that a resolution to the agency-initiated bankruptcy (in collaboration with Oregon DOJ) will be reached soon.



What's Next?

- ▶ There are currently 2 OMCB staff positions that need to be filled.
 - ▶ Currently in the process of contracting with DAS HR to assist with the recruitment process.
- ▶ Since our Inspector resigned at the end of September 2018, I have been reviewing the current inspection processes, which haven't been updated since 2014.
 - ▶ Will continue to review everything and once the 2 staff positions have been filled, we will work collaboratively to implement the new processes.
- ▶ We are in the process of transferring the FSP exam to **The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards**, which currently administers the Embalmer exam.



끝 (The End)

*"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo.
"So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."*

- J.R.R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring