



Choices

Newsletter of the Funeral Consumers Alliance
of San Antonio, Texas
a 501(c)(3) organization



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August 2024

THE BEST ONLINE WILL MAKING PROGRAMS

*U.S. News & World Report, by Rachel
Hartman, Nov. 9, 2023*

Rather than walking into an attorney's office and paying a high hourly rate, you can opt for a range of online will options to help create a will from the comfort of your home at a reasonable price. These will makers aid with documents ranging from basic wills to intricate estate plans. Finding the right will making software for your family situation can streamline the process and allow you to have everything in order for your heirs.

The following programs can help you create a will online and provide other estate planning solutions:

Nolo's Quicken WillMaker & Trust (www.nolo.com). If you want nearly everything for a customized estate plan in one place, Quicken provides software to create a will, power of attorney, health care directive, living trust and other estate-related documents. A questionnaire guides you through the process of deciding which documents you need. Nolo's WillMaker starter bundle is \$99, which includes a will, health care directives and final arrangements. More features come with the Plus version at \$139 and the All-Access version for \$209.

Fabric by Gerber Life (www.meetfabric.com). To make a will without having to sign up for anything or create an account, you can use Fabric's free online will tool. If you have a basic estate or simple family situation, this service could be a good fit. After answering a few questions, you can print the will and make it legally binding. The process takes approximately five minutes. While the service is free, the site also sells life insurance policies for a range of prices.

LegalZoom (www.legalzoom.com). If you want a professional's input when making an online will, LegalZoom provides access to an independent attorney who is knowledgeable about laws in your state. Legal counsel is available at the start of the will making process. You can also begin making a will on your own with the site's self-guided questionnaire. If you have questions, you can reach out to an attorney. Legal counsel is also available after you finish the will to help you make updates or address concerns for up to a year. Prices start at \$89.

Do Your Own Will (www.doyourownwill.com). If you're looking to spend as little as possible, Do Your Own Will provides a free way to make a will. By answering questions, you create a simple will. You can then download

the document as a Word or PDF file. There are also other estate planning documents available for free, including a pet guardian trust and durable power of attorney. While the services are free, the site states that if you have a complicated estate, it may be useful to seek legal counsel and use other estate planning tools.

FreeWill (www.freewill.com) You can use FreeWill to help you create a basic document. As you work through the steps, if you realize that your estate is more complex than you initially perceived, you can still benefit from the site. FreeWill provides free forms you can fill out to take to an attorney, which can save time and funds. The site states that you might want to pair its services with a lawyer if you have a large or complicated estate. In addition to wills, the site offers related legal planning tools like advanced health care directives, beneficiary designations and durable financial power of attorney. FreeWill is able to offer its tools for free via partnerships with nonprofits.

Rocket Lawyer (www.rocketlawyer.com) If you're not sure what to include in a will, Rocket Lawyer provides free templates of wills that can be customized to your situation. The site will guide you through the process, helping you decide what exactly to include in your will. It also provides information on other legal documents related to estate planning. You can pay \$39.99 for a will or become a premium member for \$39.99 per month to gain access to additional legal services.

Gentreo (www.gentreo.com) For a complete estate planning service that is customizable to your exact situation, Gentreo offers a way to create, store and share your estate plan. If you have a blended family, specific gifts or distinct wishes for a pet, the site walks you through the details of sorting out your preferences and making a will that suits your needs. Once the will is complete, you can upload it to your family vault and choose which beneficiaries can have access to it. The site also offers additional estate planning documents such as a health care proxy and power of attorney. You can get all the documents you need for \$150 for the first year and \$50 for each following year.

Message from the Chapter President, Amy Beyer

It is with heavy heart that I announced my resignation as President effective June 30, 2024. I have enjoyed working with FCASATX and feel I have made meaningful contributions in my time on the board and as your president. Adding the functionality of a website for on-line membership was one of my main goals. This goal was accomplished. Secondly, I garnered a new three-year contract for our membership with only a \$125 increase in the cost of direct cremation. The last time our membership saw an increase in this price was over ten years ago. Current pricing for members is: Direct Cremation \$695, Direct to Grave with graveside service \$795, and Direct Burial with graveside service \$1095. I would like to thank Ed O'Connell for his many years of service as a board member, who also resigned in May 2024. Ray Boone, Vice President resigned on June 10, 2024. Good luck with your new endeavors with another non-profit Ray! Your business leadership and acumen will be sorely missed. As you can see, we are having a large transition currently in our leadership. Feel free to contact the membership line or drop us an email if you have an interest in volunteering or stepping up into one of these roles. FCASATX is also seeking an experienced volunteer coordinator and membership coordinator. I hope this organization continues to see new growth and expansion in the coming years. Best wishes for the future! Amy Beyer.



SEEKING BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANDIDATES

Do you have an interest in serving on the local Funeral Consumer Alliance (FCA) Board of Directors? If so, please contact the FCA Secretary, Georgia Snodgrass, by email at fcasatx9@gmail.com with a short resume (no more than one page) about the qualifications you have that would make you an effective part of the FCA team. Resumes must be received by close of business on October 31, 2024. At that time, a meeting will be scheduled to interview prospective candidates from the resumes we receive as well as incumbent candidates, if any. The board positions are for 3 years beginning April 1, 2025. Attendance at one board meeting a month and the annual meeting is required. Once interviews have concluded, the Nominating Committee will put together a slate of candidates to be voted on by the members at the March 2025 annual meeting. We feel confident that among our valued members there are those with the time and commitment to be a part of our FCA team. We look forward to hearing from you.



HEAR YE! HEAR YE! A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Your FCA Board is recruiting volunteers to:

Prepare Newsletter Mailings

Pass out info at Fairs & Presentations

**Contact Prospective Members to Discuss
the benefits of FCA**

Spanish Translators at Fairs & Presentations

To Volunteer call 210-341-2213 or email

fcasatx9@gmail.com



FUNERAL CONSUMERS ALLIANCE OF SAN ANTONIO, TX, INC.
AUG 2024 MORTUARY SURVEY .. San Antonio and Some Surrounding Community Prices
[All Prices are from published General Price Lists and are subject to change without notice]

Funeral Home (F.H.)	Direct / Basic Cremation	Graveside Burial or Service + casket cost	Embalm	Refrig / day	Use of Funeral Home	Casket Range	Professional Fee
FCA MEMBER PRICES	\$ 695	\$ 795 burial, no attendees; \$1,095 svc + attendees	\$ 300	no charge 6 days / then \$35 per day	\$ 125 / hr	\$599 - \$1,799	\$0
Prices in the row above are with our contracted Mortuary (Funeral Caring USA) .. and are for our Members only. Non-member pricing at area mortuaries is indicated below. Funeral costs vary widely and are not included.							
Angelus F.H. 210-227-1461	\$ 2,550	\$ 3,870	\$ 995	\$ 175	\$ 750	\$1,250 - \$12,000	\$ 3,095
Brookehill (Dellcrest, Oak Hills & Alamo F.H.) 210-923-7523	\$3,090 - \$12,385	\$3,790 - \$16,785	\$ 995	\$395 / 3 days then \$50 / day	\$395 - \$695	\$1,195 - \$12,995	\$ 2,495
Camero F.H. 210-624-2428	\$ 3,020	\$ 5,220	\$ 795	\$ 795 / 5 days then \$125 / day	\$675 - \$800	\$1,799 - \$6,999	\$ 2,500
Castillo F.H. 210-432-8586	\$2,085 - \$2,585	\$ 2,500	\$ 650	\$ 50	\$ 600	\$895 - \$5,595	\$ 1,750
Castle Ridge 210-645-6000	\$ 1,995	\$3,695 - \$10,645	\$ 995	\$ 65	\$ 495	\$1,355 - \$8,000	\$ 2,765
Chapel Hill F.H. 210-599-2035	\$2,400 - \$10,400	\$4,595 - \$12,595	\$ 900	\$900 / 10 days then \$100 / day	\$ 500	\$995 - \$8,000	\$ 2,995
Colonial F.H. 210-658-7037	\$2,610 - \$13,205	\$4,120 - \$15,715	\$ 1,195	\$ 695	\$295 - \$3,995	\$1,195 - \$11,595	\$ 2,245
Crofts-Crow F.H. (Johnson City 830-868-4444 & Blanco 830-833- 4523, Texas)	\$ 2,600	\$3,250 - \$9,450	\$ 865	\$ 50	\$510 - \$650	\$1,295 - \$6,700	\$ 2,850
Delgado F.H. 210-533-0003	\$ 1,595	packages from \$4,325 - \$4,850	\$ 550	\$ 75	\$ 450	\$650 - \$3,210	\$ 995
Doeppenschmidt (Canyon Lake 830-964-3050 & New Braunfels 830-625-3434)	\$1,800 - \$17,300	\$3,295 - \$18,795	\$ 895	\$425 / 3 days then \$25 / day	\$795 - \$1,195	\$1,095 - \$15,500	\$ 3,645
D.W. Brooks F.H. 210-223-2045	\$1,599 - \$9,995	\$4,595 and up	\$ 1,295	\$350 / 3 days then \$40 / day	\$ 450	\$995 - \$75,000	\$ 1,700
Funeral Caring USA (7 locations) 210-661-5001	\$1,199 - \$2,199	\$2,199 - \$2,999	\$ 399	\$ 40	\$425 - \$799	\$599 - \$1,999	\$ 499
Goetz F.H. (Seguin, Texas) 830-379-2313	\$3,295 - \$9,050	\$3,995 - \$20,990	\$ 995	\$295 / 10 days then \$40 / day	\$ 695	\$1,855 - \$16,995	\$ 3,015
Hardin F.H. 210-265-5141	\$1,295 and up	\$2,595 and up	\$ 500	\$ 50	\$ 595	\$1,350 - \$12,000	\$ 1,295
Hillcrest F.H. 210-431-9820	\$ 2,135	\$2,600 - \$3,695	\$ 650	\$ 100	\$ 900	\$1,095 - \$8,595	\$ 1,800
Holt & Holt F.H. (Boerne, TX) 830-249-9128	\$2,195 - \$2,345	\$2,195 - \$4,445	\$ 650	\$ 100	\$300 - \$450	\$1,350 - \$6,650	\$ 2,975
Hurley F.H. (Pleasanton, TX) 830-569-2535	\$ 2,450	\$ 2,800	\$ 995	\$ 100	\$ 750	\$1,900 - \$8,200	\$ 2,600
Kerrville F.H. (Kerrville, TX) 830-895-5111	\$2,595 - \$14,590	\$2,395 - \$14,390	\$ 575	\$ 125	\$250 - \$350	\$1,295 - \$11,995	\$ 2,650
LaPaz All Faiths F.H. 210-222-1321	\$1,280 - \$10,575	\$1,580 - \$14,575	\$ 995	\$195 / 3 days then \$50 / day	\$125 - \$350	\$1,195 - \$12,995	\$ 795
Lewis F.H. 210-227- 7281 or 210-227-4400	\$ 695	\$900 - \$1,895	\$ 675	\$ 175	\$350 - \$500	\$995 - \$45,000	\$ 1,695
Lux F.H. (New Braunfels & Seguin, TX) 830-624-0500	\$ 1,620	\$2,195 - \$3,660	\$ 825	\$ 45	\$ 550	\$1,465 - \$2,525 and up	\$ 2,395
M. E. Rodriguez 210- 226-6111	\$ 2,900	\$2,490 and up	\$ 775	\$150 / 3 days then \$45 / day	\$ 395	\$1,850 and up	\$ 1,695

Funeral Home (F.H.)	Direct Cremation	Immediate Burial + casket	Embalm	Refrig / day	Use of Funeral Home	Casket Range	Professional Fee
Meadowlawn F.H. 210-661-3991	\$ 1,570	\$ 3,570	\$ 1,050	\$ 325	\$550 - \$795	\$1,295 - \$14,950	\$ 2,395
Mission Park & Delicrest & Alamo 210-616-0510 / 210-337-4082 / 210-225-5731	\$3,090 - \$12,385	\$3,790 - \$16,785	\$ 995	\$395 / 3 days then \$50 / day	\$395 - \$895	\$1,195 - \$12,995	\$ 2,495
Mission Park (North & South) 210-349-1414 / 210-924-4242	\$3,090 - \$12,385	\$4,190 - \$57,285	\$ 995	\$395 / 3 days then \$50 / day	\$425 - \$745	\$1,195 - \$53,095	\$ 2,895
Olinger-Saenz, Southside, Heritage Oak 210-924-4137, 210-922-6339, 210-337-9999	\$2,120 - \$6,415	\$3,480 - \$7,775	\$ 795	\$ 65	\$ 495	\$1,695 - \$4,295	\$ 2,395
Ortiz Mortuary 210-432-0987	\$ 1,795 - \$3,145	\$ 3,245	\$ 795	\$ 175	\$ 795	\$1,350 - \$10,000	\$ 1,895
Palm Heights F.H. 210-924-4568	\$ 2,195 - \$11,490	\$2,800 - \$15,885	\$ 995	\$395 / 3 days then \$50 / day	\$395 - \$750	\$1,195 - \$12,995	\$ 1,595
Palmer Mortuary (Seguin, TX) 830-379-9430	\$3,295 - \$9,090	\$4,630 - \$21,625	\$ 895	\$295 / 10 days then \$40 / day	\$ 585	\$1,795 - \$16,995	\$ 3,015
Porter Loring F.H. (3 locations) 210-227-8221	\$3,345 - \$16,230	\$4,795 - \$17,680	\$ 995	\$275 / 3 days	\$ 995	\$1,390 - \$12,885	\$ 2,895
Primrose Funeral Svcs (Pearsall 830-334-3361, Devine 830-663-4445, & Lytle 830-709-0698, TX)	\$2,500 - \$11,095	\$2,700 - \$12,195	\$ 995	\$ 100	\$450 - \$750	\$1,395 - \$12,195	\$ 2,400
Puente & Sons F.H. (2 locations) 210-533-5300 or 210-653-6536	\$985 - \$1,980	\$5,305 - \$22,310	\$ 795	\$ 75	\$ 695	\$995 - \$18,000	\$ 2,600
Roy Akers, Funeria del Angel 210-226-7201	\$2,165 - \$7,260	\$3,520 - \$14,015	\$ 1,195	\$ 695	\$395 - \$3,995	\$1,195 - \$10,495	\$ 2,045
San Antonio Mortuary 210-924-8888	\$ 2,370	\$ 2,100	\$ 600	\$ 50	\$300 / hr	\$495 - \$20,000	\$ 900
Schertz F.H. (Schertz, TX) 210-658-9224	\$3,240 - \$11,135	\$3,650 - \$11,045	\$ 840	\$ 40	\$395 - \$975	\$1,595 - \$7,395	\$ 2,935
Southside F.H. 210-922-6339	\$ 2,250	packages from \$4,800 - \$7,285	\$ 795	\$ 65	\$ 495	\$1,695 - \$14,995	\$ 2,395
Southwest F.H. 210-932-0050	\$ 995	\$ 1,650	\$ 600	\$ 200	\$ 400	\$1,150 - \$1,895	\$ 1,250
Sunset F.H. Northwest 210-521-2111	\$2,610 - \$13,205	\$4,820 - \$16,415	\$ 1,195	\$ 695	\$395 - \$3,995	\$1,195 - \$11,595	\$ 3,245
Sunset F.H. North 210-495-7770	\$2,610 - \$13,205	\$4,820 - \$15,715	\$ 1,195	\$ 695	\$395 - \$3,995	\$1,195 - \$11,595	\$ 2,445
Sutton-Sutton & Woodard's F.H. 210-359-6037, 38 or 39	\$700 - \$950	\$900 - \$1,695	\$ 750	\$ 95	\$ 375	\$1,750 - \$4,895	\$ 1,680
Texas F.H. 210-433-1000	\$ 1,350	\$ 2,545	\$ 650	\$ 50	\$ 500	not provided	\$ 1,400
Tondre-Guinn, 2 locations (Castroville, TX) 830-931-2221 or 830-709-0709	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,200	\$ 900	\$0 / 3 days then \$45 / day	\$300 - \$800	\$1,275 - \$17,995	\$ 2,300
Trevino F.H. (Funeraria del Angel) Cupples Rd 210-434-0595	\$2,165 - \$7,260	\$3,480 - \$13,975	\$ 1,195	\$ 695	\$395 - \$3,995	\$1,195 - \$10,495	\$ 1,645
Trevino F.H. (Funeraria del Angel) Palo Alto Rd 210-924-5801	\$1,840 - \$6,935	\$2,530 - \$13,025	\$ 1,195	\$ 370	\$395 - \$3,995	\$1,195 - \$10,495	\$ 970
aCremation 877-353-3626	\$795 up: on-line cremation only		not provided		\$295 - \$595	N/A	not provided
Heart of TX Cremation SA 210-599-2660	\$ 695	N/A	\$ 825	\$ 50	\$170- \$650	N/A	not provided
Neptune Society 210-880-1800 **	\$2,431 up: cremation only	\$1,482 - \$2,377	\$ 1,495	not provided			\$ 975

All Prices are from published General Price Lists and are subject to change without notice.

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Why Some People Wait To Die Until They're Alone

healthdigest.com, by Jennifer
Anandanayagam, Oct. 23, 2023



Dying alone usually has a negative connotation attached to it. This is probably why movies portray it as sad and heartbreaking. On the flip side, dying while being surrounded by friends and family is often thought of as a good death. The person was loved and made to feel secure as they passed on. They didn't have to endure the pain of dying alone.

But what happens in the final moments of death is a subject that's largely still being discovered. No one really knows for sure definite answers to the big questions like "Does your consciousness continue after you stop breathing?" or "Will you have a better death if you have loved ones surrounding your bed?"

Social researcher and death studies scholar Glenys Caswell from Nottingham University noted that, for some people, dying alone is something that they choose of their own accord (via *The Conversation*). One of Caswell's studies, which was published in the journal *Mortality* in 2017, involved interviewing 11 elderly persons who lived by themselves and seven hospice nurses about their thoughts surrounding dying alone. While there was some belief among the hospice nurses that dying alone is not something they'd endorse, Caswell found that for the older people, "dying alone was not seen as something that is automatically bad, and for some of the older people it was to be preferred." They preferred it to having their freedom curtailed or being confined to a care home.

They might die alone to spare their loved ones pain

Lizzy Miles — a Columbus, Ohio-based hospice social worker and author of *"Somewhere In Between: The Hokey Pokey, Chocolate Cake and The Shared Death Experience"* — is of the opinion that some people can choose when they die. She wrote

in the hospice and palliative medicine blog *Pallimed* that people who choose to wait and die alone might be doing so out of concern for their loved ones.

"We have those patients who die in the middle of the night. We hear stories about the loved one who just stepped out for five minutes and the patient died. We may have even witnessed a quick death ourselves. I believe this happens by the patient's choice," wrote Miles. She added that this happens mostly in instances when the dying person is a parent. "I believe it is a protective factor," she explained.

Henry Fersko-Weiss, a licensed clinical social worker and executive director of the International End-of-Life Doula Association, feels slightly differently about the topic. While he doesn't discount the fact that some people might die alone, he shared in a YouTube video that people like feeling connected and safe before they pass away. Fersko-Weiss said that "because of the way we think about death, [we] feel that we'll be a burden to loved ones" if we let them see us die. Sparing loved ones the pain of it all might be at the heart of the decision but this is something friends and family should have an open conversation about, he added.

Having an open dialogue with your loved one can help

No matter how painful those final moments might be, it can be a good idea to equip yourself with the right tools to have open conversations that foster understanding on both sides, say the experts. You might want to lean into what dying people want you to know about how they'd ideally want to go, and also assess your own emotions, cultural biases, and ideas around it. If you're unable to broach the topic yourselves, enlist the help of hospice care workers or even a therapist.

It is possible that the person who is dying is concerned that the loved ones whom they are leaving behind will carry with them for the rest of their lives the burden of seeing them pass, shared Fersko-Weiss in the video. You could reassure them by saying something like, "Of course, we want to be there. It doesn't matter how it looks or how it sounds or how emotionally difficult it may be to be present. It is part of our love for you that we would want to be there," said the death doula.

How you choose to be present when someone you love is dying is a decision both the dying and those being left behind can arrive at together, per the experts. And, in the instance when your loved one chooses to wait and die alone, "openness created through discussion might also help to remove some of the guilt that family members feel when they miss the moment of their relative's death," added Caswell (via *The Conversation*).

A FATHER'S SPECIAL HEADSTONE

From NPR, July 7, 2022, by Vanessa Romo



Matthew Robison, who had cerebral palsy, spent his entire life in a wheelchair. So when he died at age 10 1/2, his parents thought they'd commemorate his life with a unique grave monument showing that he'd been liberated from the device.

"I got the idea that he would just be able to rise physically from his wheelchair and go up to heaven," his father, Ernest Robison, told NPR.

"And he'd be free from all of the disabilities and limitations that he had here on the Earth," Matthew's mother, Anneke Robison, added in the same phone interview.

The result of Ernest Robison's vision is a moving, giant bronze sculptural headstone at Matthew's gravesite at the Salt Lake City Cemetery. The sculpture depicts the boy standing with one foot on the seat of a dilapidated wheelchair. His face is lifted and his left arm is reaching up toward the sky — movements his mother says he was incapable of making while he was alive.

Meanwhile, his right arm is "folded with his hand hanging down like he was disabled," his father explained. The whole work of art rests on a square block with Matthew's brief epitaph: Sept. 23, 1988 - Feb. 29, 1999.

It looks nothing like a conventional grave marker, and the Robisons say that for them, that's what makes it a joy to go to the cemetery — "because it gives us hope and peace," Anneke Robison added.

The sculpture has also become popular on social networks online and among cemetery visitors — many place stuffed animals and other toys on the headstone. According to the Robisons, there is a new wave of interest in the sculpture every few years.

"I can't really explain what makes it come back up on the internet or why it suddenly becomes popular again," Matthew's father said. "But it makes sense to me. ... It touches people in a special way."

Ordinances typically restrict gravestone designs

Most recently, photos of the monument have been circulating on Reddit, drawing thousands of comments from users, who call it inspiring and beautiful. They also wonder why there aren't more customized headstones in other cemeteries.

Keith Van Otten, the Salt Lake City sexton, the person responsible for maintenance of cemetery grounds, says there's an easy explanation.

Most cemeteries are subject to city ordinances that restrict the size of monuments, Van Otten told NPR. The ordinances typically set size standards, which are established to ensure proper maintenance and future burials in the area, he added.

In cases where families hope to use a headstone that's out of the ordinary, Van Otten noted that at the Salt Lake City Cemetery, "there is a variance process, and the public can go through that if they want an oversized [grave marker], and that goes through our office and then through the mayor's office."

The cemetery has become something of a sightseeing destination for locals and tourists. A local group, Friends of the Salt Lake City Cemetery, leads organized tours, and Van Otten says brochures for self-guided tours are available.

He said Matthew Robison's grave was part of a tour recently led by a state historian, who talked about the different types of headstones and sculptures that can be found among the cemetery's 125,000 graves.

Van Otten said it is popular with visitors, "especially kids, because they see this little boy, kind of floating out of his wheelchair, and he looks happy." "I think it speaks to them," Van Otten said.

DOCTOR SUPPORT FOR ASSISTED DEATH RISES BUT DEBATE CONTINUES

From MedScape.com, Alicia Ault, July 7, 2017

The number of physicians who support the concept of assisted death seems to be on the rise, but even in states where it is legal to provide a prescription to a patient who wants to die, few doctors have done so.

Sixteen percent of almost 300 physicians who responded to a recent Medscape Medical News poll said they practice in states with a physician-assisted dying law. Only 17% of those physicians said they have used it with a patient. Thirteen percent said they'd received a request but had declined, and 70% said they'd never been asked to facilitate a patient's death. Some 62% of doctors who practice in states that do not allow assisted death said they had been in a situation in which they wished the patient could have been able to exercise that right.

Six states now allow physician-assisted death. A Medscape ethics report published in December 2016 found that 57% of doctors who participated said physician-assisted death should be available to the terminally ill, up from 54% in 2014 and 46% in 2010. In the latest Medscape poll, 56% of doctors who responded said they thought the passage of physician-assisted dying laws was a positive development.

A large number of commenters on the poll said that allowing people to choose to end their lives was good medicine, as alternatives merely prolonged suffering. Some, however, said physician-assisted death was not acceptable. "The golden rule of medicine is: 'First, do no harm.' Allowing death to occur with dignity, medical support, et al is fine — picking a time and causing it — not," said Dana Panknin, MD, a family medicine specialist.

"Needless suffering is more painful for patients as well as families," said Saraswati Chhetry, MD, a family practice doctor. "Although [the] oath says 'Do no harm,' allowing prolonged suffering is doing more harm by not giving peace."

Concerns Abound

Many also sounded a note of caution. "Our role is to ease the suffering of the dying patient and their family," said Ian Hunt, MD, a pulmonologist who said a significant part of his practice was in the intensive care unit. "I am acutely aware that our modalities of treatment can become modalities of torture. As such, components of ICU care should be withheld at times," he said. Dr Hunt said he did not consider that to be patient-assisted death, but added, "I am very concerned that patient-assisted suicide could be misused."

Edward Childe, MD, a psychiatrist, said he was in favor of physician-assisted death, but added, "I would be hesitant to prescribe it for the mentally ill because I have found that severely ill patients who have worsened with years of physical treatments have been able to become well with modified psychoanalytic therapy."

Internist John Bakos, MD, said he also was concerned about patients who might be depressed. "The ability to rationally choose to end your life should be a protected right of every human," said Dr Bakos. "The issue of state of mind, is, however a tricky one. Having a terminal medical condition with months to live should unarguably be a reason to shorten your life painlessly," he said. "However, to those profoundly depressed, death can seem an overly attractive option," said Dr Bakos. He added, "With safeguards regarding diagnosis, a two physician requirement, most of these concerns can be addressed."

Requiring evaluation by two physicians is one way to help determine whether someone is mentally capable to make the decision, said Roger Kligler, MD, an internist. Dr Kligler, who said he has metastatic, incurable prostate cancer, has been working to pass an aid-in-dying law in Massachusetts. "Having cared for many patients who have died with my disease, I know that the end of my life will be difficult," he said.

Making assisted death available can improve the use of hospice and palliative care and end-of-life discussions, decrease suicide in the terminally ill, and give them peace of mind, said Dr Kligler. "Because of my work on this, I was able to have a good conversation with my physician that would not have taken place," he said. "Please put yourself in my shoes and ask what options you would want for you or your family members having a difficult death."

Records show millions paid out for funerals of COVID-19 victims in Bexar County

by Jaie Avila / News 4 San Antonio, Thu, June 13th 2024

SAN ANTONIO - The greatest cost of the pandemic was the number of precious lives lost, but the financial impact was also devastating. The News 4 I-Team records show how many families in Bexar County requested assistance to pay for the funerals of loved ones who died from COVID-19.

The records released by FEMA in response to our open records request show that 3,783 Bexar County families applied for COVID-19 Funeral Assistance and 3,123 were determined to be eligible. FEMA says a total of \$19,133,527 has been sent out to pay for funerals in Bexar County. The program pays up to \$9,000 for burial costs, if a person's death was attributed to COVID-19.

Bexar County had the third highest amount of COVID-19 Funeral Assistance in Texas, behind only Harris County with \$38,008,976 and Dallas County with \$21,553,135.

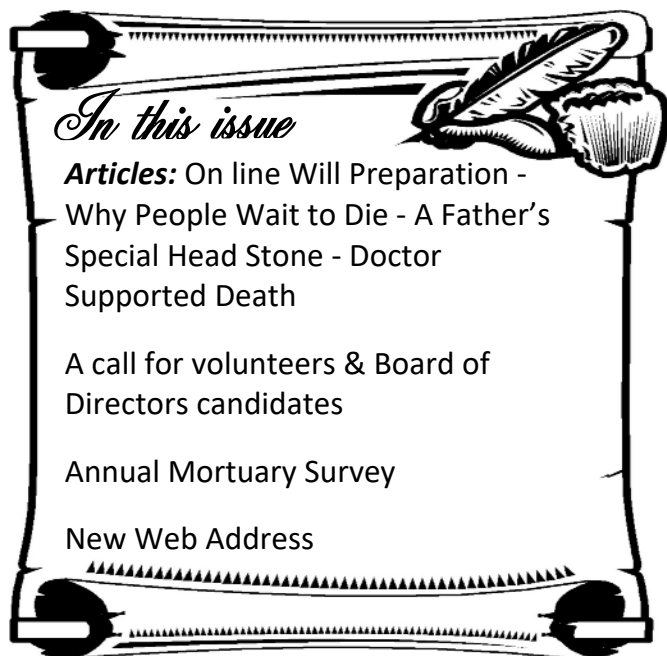


Funeral Consumers Alliance
Of San Antonio
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Since 1948, over 70 years of dedicated service.

**Funeral Consumers Alliance
Of San Antonio, Texas**

Established in 1948 as a non-profit consumers, all volunteer service and educational organization, advocating simplicity, dignity and choice in cremation and funeral practices.

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The Newsletter of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of San Antonio, Texas. Published for the information of members and friends of the Alliance. Newsletter Editor: Quintin Cantu

Contributions for Choices publication are welcome

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We Appreciate Our Donors...

A Note of Thanks
**Mary Anderson
Marilyn McCullough
Patricia Serna**



A NEW ON-LINE LOOK

Funeral Consumers Alliance of San Antonio (FCA) has a new website address:

www.funeralssatx.org

The site is still undergoing construction so be patient with us while we get online joining & donations up and running. We are excited about the new look; and thanks to our Webmaster, Jessie Ong, for his tireless efforts to make our website user friendly and as up to date as possible.