

§2883. Deaths in almshouses, prisons and institutions

All public officers, agents and servants of any and every county and municipality, and of any and every almshouse, prison, morgue, hospital or any other public institution having charge or control over dead human bodies required to be buried at the public expense are required to notify immediately the board of distribution, or the person or persons as may from time to time be designated by the board, or its duly authorized officer or agent, whenever any body or bodies come into their possession, charge or control, and shall, without fee or reward, deliver the body or bodies to the board or its duly authorized officer or agent, and permit and suffer the board or its agents, or the physicians and surgeons from time to time designated by it or them, who comply with this chapter, to take and remove any and all bodies to be used within the State for the advancement of medical education. No notice need be given and no body must be delivered if any person, satisfying the authorities in charge of the body that the person is a member of the family or next of kin to the deceased, shall claim the body for burial, but it must be surrendered to the person for interment, and no notice may be given and no body delivered to the board or its agents if the deceased person was a traveler and not a vagabond, who died suddenly, in which case the body must be buried. No notice may be given and no body delivered to the board or its agents by the Department of Corrections if, at its option, the department assumes responsibility for the expenses of burial. The option may be exercised by the Department of Corrections regardless of whether the body is claimed by a member of the family or next of kin, but in such a case it may only be exercised with the agreement of the person making the claim. The superintendents and medical staffs of the Riverview Psychiatric Center and the Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center, having charge or control over dead human bodies required to be buried at public expense, when no person satisfies the superintendent of either hospital for the mentally ill, and the department that the person is a member of the family of, or has some family connection or is next of kin to the deceased, and wishes to claim the body for burial, may for the advancement of science hold an autopsy and examine the body of the deceased person, notwithstanding any provisions of this chapter. [PL 1995, c. 395, Pt. G, §7 (AMD); PL 2005, c. 236, §§3,4 (REV).]

Notwithstanding the availability of lump sum death benefits under the United States Social Security Act, the term "buried at public expense" as written in this section shall be deemed to include the unclaimed dead bodies of all indigent persons otherwise within the intentment of this section. [PL 1989, c. 56 (AMD).]

As used in this section, "burial" includes cremation or natural organic reduction as defined in section 2841-A, subsection 1 and burial of the remains of the body. [PL 2023, c. 676, §16 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

P&SL 1973, c. 53 (AMD). PL 1981, c. 493, §2 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 56 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 395, §G7 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 395, §G20 (AFF). PL 1995, c. 560, §K82 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 560, §K83 (AFF). PL 2001, c. 354, §3 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 386, §5 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 689, §B6 (REV). PL 2005, c. 236, §§3,4 (REV). PL 2023, c. 676, §16 (AMD).

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