



**FIAT-IFTA**  
**Fédération Internationale des Associations de Thanatologues**  
**International Federation of Thanatologists Associations**

**To the Ministry /Department of  
Health and Social Care of the 80  
Countries of the Funeral Directors –  
Members of FIAT-IFTA**

**FIAT-IFTA Office**  
**Oude Enghweg 14**  
**1217 JC HILVERSUM**  
**The Netherlands**  
**E: [info@thanos.org](mailto:info@thanos.org)**

Hilversum – NL, February 4, 2020

Dear Madam, Sir,

The FIAT-IFTA Federation – World Organization of Funeral Operatives – represents worldwide the staff and employees of funeral homes in 80 countries. It is evident that in all countries the COVID-19 public health crisis has widened and deepened the vulnerability of health care workers and first responders in this pandemic.

FIAT-IFTA considers funeral professionals as first responders who are exposed directly to high-risk situations comparable to the conditions of persons working in hospitals, nursing and retirement homes. The FIAT-IFTA international federation has over the last year been closely monitoring the experiences of our members and has become increasingly concerned by the mounting challenges and the risks that our members are having to face.

Funeral homes are dealing with an increase in the number of deaths, a constant and serious risk of infection faced by staff working in funeral homes and they are often overwhelmed by the work and the pressure presented in these difficult times.

The work of funeral professionals exposes them to the deceased and to the family members being at risk of transmission of the disease although all measures of protection (PPE) are taken. FIAT-IFTA has encountered admirable examples of governments who have been committed to consistent health communication to address concerns of health care workers and funeral professionals.

With the advent of vaccination programs in many of the countries in which our members operate, an opportunity to mitigate this pressure has been presented. Our members Funeral Homes around the world have overwhelmingly expressed their urgent need to be included in Phase 1A of the vaccination planning.

**FIAT-IFTA – The World Organization of Funeral Operatives**  
**NGO Special Consultative Status with UN-ECOSOC**  
**International NGO Consultative Status UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage**  
**Founded by Royal Decree the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 1970, Principality of Monaco. Registered Headquarters - Amsterdam- NL.**  
**Chamber of Commerce no: 34391917**





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In order to protect workers at high-risk exposure and to maintain the resilience in the funeral sector - an essential public service - it is of great importance to set out a framework for national COVID-19 vaccination strategy including the prioritizing of all persons employed in funeral homes.

This request to the governments of the member states of FIAT-IFTA - World Organization of Funeral Operatives is the result of a research conducted by FIAT-IFTA with its members.

Overwhelmingly they embrace this opinion that – given the current epidemiological situation of each nation – the best option for preventing the spreading of the disease among our first responder professionals is the prioritizing of vaccination.

Therefore, on behalf of our members, FIAT-IFTA would like to respectfully request that funeral workers are included on the priority list for vaccination so that they can be protected and can continue their work, which is of paramount importance in dealing with this crisis.

In advance the Board Members of FIAT-IFTA thank you for your appreciated attention to this urgent matter for the international funeral sector.

Sincerely,

President Hiroshi Kitajima – JAPAN

Vice President Marek Cichewicz – POLAND

Vice President William C. Wappner – USA

Vice President Johan Dexters – BELGIUM

Secretary Emerson De Luca – UNITED KINGDOM

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