

THE NEED FOR ADVANCE PLANNING

- **Have you considered what immediate decisions must be made by your family when you die?**
- **Have you and your family discussed these decisions and arrived at an understanding?**
- **Do your present plans provide for the memorial or funeral arrangements that you and your family really want and can afford?**

When death occurs in a family that has done no advance planning, the survivors may accept conventional and costly funeral arrangements because of social pressure, emotional stress, or lack of time.

Planning ahead is a loving gift you can give to your family and friends. By **making plans now**, you ease the burden on your survivors. Then, instead of having to figure out what you might have wanted and how to pay for it, your family will know your last wishes and can focus on grieving their loss and celebrating your life.



FUNERAL ADVICE YOU CAN TRUST

The **Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts** is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to helping our neighbors make funeral or memorial arrangements that are meaningful, dignified, and affordable.

We achieve this goal through consumer education outreach, including group presentations, funeral home price surveys, our newsletter and other printed materials, and individual consultations. We serve primarily residents of the four counties of Western Massachusetts: Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire.

Founded in 1959 and incorporated in 1962 as the Springfield Memorial Society (later known as the Memorial Society of Western Massachusetts), we changed our name in 2001 to emphasize our consumer focus. The FCA of Western Massachusetts (FCAWM) is an affiliate of the Funeral Consumers Alliance, a national federation of consumer information societies (www.funerals.org). This affiliation allows reciprocal arrangements for members who travel in or move to other parts of the country.

We are run solely by volunteers, and have no attachment to the funeral industry or any religious group. Our membership is open to all.

How you benefit . . .

- You become an **educated consumer**, able to shop for services with full knowledge of your rights and options.
- You get **advice** from a group of knowledgeable volunteers who are not in the business of selling funeral services.
- You learn **why it is important to plan ahead** for the funeral or memorial arrangements you want.
- You also learn **why it may not be wise to pre-pay** for these arrangements, and what your alternatives are.
- You gain **information on options** for body disposal—conventional burial, “green” burial, cremation, donation of organs or the whole body, home funerals, and more.

Members receive . . .

- The “Before I Go, You Should Know” planner (a fill-in-the-blanks booklet), and informative brochures
- FCAWM newsletter (twice a year)
- Our biennial funeral home price comparison
- Access to information and support from this organization
- Invitation to FCAWM member events, including our annual meeting (features a speaker of interest; usually held in October)
- The satisfaction of helping to support an organization dedicated to educating consumers on end-of-life choices and protecting their right to choose arrangements that are meaningful, dignified, and affordable.

Rev. 10/2018

BECOME A MEMBER

- Please enroll me in the **Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts** and send me the “Before I Go, You Should Know” planner and membership packet. I am enclosing the suggested membership donation of \$30.

We do not share our membership list outside of the FCA network.

- Please enroll me in **FCAWM** and send my “Before I Go” planner and membership packet. I am a person of limited means, and enclose a membership donation of \$_____.

- I enclose an additional contribution of \$_____ to help support FCAWM.

See reverse side for additional options.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Phone(s) _____

Email Address _____

- I prefer email link to newsletters online (thus saving printing and postage costs).

Please mail this form with check or money order payable to FCAWM:
Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Mass.
P. O. Box 994, Greenfield, MA 01302-0994

Thank you!

Please send me information on the following topic(s):

- Funeral planning
- Prepaying - benefits and dangers
- Cremation
- Organ and body donation
- Green burial
- Other: _____

Note that information on these topics may also be found on our website and that of the national FCA office, www.funerals.org

Please send _____ additional "Before I Go" Planner(s). I enclose a donation of \$15 each.

Please mail a copy of this FCAWM membership brochure to:

If you would like to invite an FCAWM speaker to make a presentation to your social organization or religious group, please contact us.

I would like to volunteer. Please indicate your interest(s) and we will contact you:

- Help gather information (e.g., price lists)
- Write letters, articles, or press releases
- Help produce or edit our Newsletters
- Help maintain and update our Website
- Do outreach at information fairs or to groups
- Monitor legislation or lobby for needed reforms
- Serve on the FCAWM Board
- Other: _____

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts

P. O. Box 994, Greenfield, MA 01302-0994
(413) 376-4747

www.FuneralConsumersWMass.org
FCAWMass@gmail.com

Did you know . . . ?

• **Most individuals never share their funeral or burial wishes with their family members.**

FCAWM members receive forms and instructions on how to communicate this information, sparing relatives from difficult, expensive decisions.

• **A conventional funeral in the U.S. can cost well over \$8,000 — before you get to the cemetery!**

FCAWM members learn how to purchase simpler services for a fraction of the cost.

• **Embalming and fancy caskets are not required for cremation or burial.**

FCAWM members can avoid unnecessary procedures and expenses by learning what is required and what is optional.

• **There are many alternatives and choices in death care.**

FCAWM members learn about whole body donation, home funerals, green or natural burial, and other options.

• **Neither your will nor your safety deposit box is a good place to put your funeral instructions.**

FCAWM members learn to keep their written instructions in a readily accessible place.



Join the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts to learn more about your rights and options.

FUNERAL CONSUMERS ALLIANCE OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

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Don't Get Caught Dead Without Us!



Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts

Protecting your right to choose meaningful, dignified, and affordable final arrangements