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**OFFICE OF THE CORONER** PARISH OF EAST FELICIANA  
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Emb. board 838-5109

RE: Charges for cremation permits,

To whom it may concern,

Coroner's Office will no longer charge funeral homes for cremation permits or body bags. After reviewing certain laws that regulate fees the coroner can charge we believe the cost of cremation permits and body bags should be paid to the coroner by the governing authority.

RS 13:5706 A.(1) The coroner shall receive: (a) For every investigation, including issuing necessary papers and reports, fifty dollars. Death certificates and cremation certificates should be considered necessary papers and included in the price for every investigation. RS 13:5713E(1) reads as follows: The coroner shall furnish a death certificate based on his examination, investigation, or autopsy, and he shall state as best he can the cause and means of death. RS 13:5718 Cremation of bodies... If the cremation of a body is requested, the funeral director shall immediately notify the coroner who has jurisdiction in the death. If, after the necessary investigation, the coroner is satisfied that there are no suspicious circumstances surrounding the death, he shall issue a permit for cremation. If the investigation reveals suspicious circumstances or the reasonable probability of the commission of a crime, the coroner shall deny the permit. Whenever a cremation certificate is requested by a funeral home on a coroner case, or a non-coroner case, the coroner after conducting an investigation can charge the authorized fifty dollars. If viewing the body was required he may charge an additional fifty dollars. As stated in RS 13:5706 D.1, this fee should be paid by the parish or municipality, not the funeral home.

B.(1) All necessary or unavoidable expenses, including supplies, incident to the operation and functioning of the coroner's office shall be paid by the parish when such expenses are certified by the coroner as being necessary or unavoidable. All unavoidable expenses, including supplies, incident to the operation and functioning of the coroner's office should include such items as body bags. Some coroners charge funeral homes for the cost of a body bag used to transport the deceased but according to this statute a body bag should be considered a necessary supply to operate the coroner's office and shall be paid for by the parish. In turn funeral homes pass this cost on to family members who are most of the time residence of the parish responsible for the cost. When looking at RS 13:5715 A.(1), upon completion of an autopsy or completion of the coroner's investigation, if the investigation reveals that an autopsy is not required, the coroner shall release the body to the family or friends for burial. There is nothing here to support the coroner forcing a family or friend of the deceased to pay for any supplies used during the course of his investigation or autopsy. Demanding a funeral home, hired by a family, to meet the cost of any supplies used to process a deceased individual is the same as a direct charge to the family. It is constitutionally mandated for each parish to have a coroner and the laws are designed for the parish and municipalities to step up and be responsible for the cost associated with funding that office.

Sincerely,

Michael Cramer, MD  
Coroner