Winter

2026

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Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge

Annual Meeting 2024/2025 Year

The annual meeting of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge was held in September 2025. The speaker was board member Dr Tiffany Carpenetti, Associate Professor of Anatomy at the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr Carpenetti reviewed the current Virginia guidelines for whole body donation and stressed the value of this contribution to medical education. She reported on programs honoring the donors and ways to safeguard donor wishes. As well, the history of human anatomy discovery was included in the presentation.

In Virginia, individuals who wish to donate their bodies must do so through the Virginia State Anatomical Program (VSAP). You give many gifts in your lifetime. The gift of donating your body will make a significant and lasting contribution to medical science. The forms needed to preregister with VSAP are found at:

https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/va-state-anatomical-program/vsap-forms

The 2024/2025 annual report noted that we continue as a source of information on end-of-life subjects with presentations, updated documents on the website, and personal contact for answering individual concerns. The full annual report may be found on the fcavbr.org website https://fcavbr.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/2025-Annual-Report-of-Funeral-Consumers-Alliance-of-the-Virginia-Blue-Ridge.pdf

Death Café

The Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge (FCAVBR) facilitated several Death Cafes in the past year. Most recently, the Dublin library hosted a Café attended by 12 people on January 8. These are opportunities to discuss this subject with a group of accepting people who have their own thoughts around the subject of death and dying.

The next scheduled Death Café will be held in the Woodlawn Studio at Warm Hearth Village, Blacksburg, VA, on Tuesday, February 17, from 1-3 pm. These events are at no charge and open to all.

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More and More

End-of-life, Funerals, Wills, it seems like more information is appearing in the media that will help to make people aware of these subjects.
One of our members, Bill Baker, has provided links to many of these, one of which:

Good Death Society Blog—
No One Dies Alone - Reflections of a NODA Volunteer
https://www.thegooddeathsocietyblog.net/2026/01/18/no-one-dies-alone-reflections-of-a-noda-volunteer/

No One Dies Alone is a compassionate volunteer program that ensures people with no one else available have someone by their side at the end of life, bringing dignity and comfort through human presence.

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Our Past President, Sandy Schlaudecker, has moved to Dublin, Ohio. The newspaper there, the Columbus Dispatch, has been full of information that we all need.

The December 14, 2025 issue included an article, “Grave Expenses”. This was taken from USA Today, written by Daniel de Vise and included such values as “37% of Americans have taken on debt after a loved one has died”. Another statistic cited is that only 39% of older adults had prepared for the costs that will follow their death. He notes that an average funeral cost in 2023 was $7,848. He mentioned several surveys which demonstrated the lack of preparedness that members of the Funeral Consumers Alliance know to be common. It is reassuring to see media being more aware of this subject.

What's happening in Richmond

The 2026 session of the Virginia Legislature began January 14. FCAVBR tries to follow actions and bills being discussed that relate to end-of-life care and funerals .

Virginia General Assembly legislation concerning death and funerals often focuses on clarifying disposition authority. For instance, the bill HB 381 deals with the funeral services responsibility in providing written notification of special circumstances. This bill seeks to clarify Code of Virginia 32.1-309.1, part of which includes action for a body which has not been claimed.

HB 435 concerns Palliative care. HB 548 relates to criteria for determining the capacity of an individual to make health care decisions. Then includes a directive for establishment of a surogate in the absence of an appointed agent for death care decisions. Knowing that this is a condition under discussion emphasizes the need to assure one has already designated a health care agent. HB 133 amends laws relating to advance directives and electronoic execution of estate documents.

There have been discussions around "Death with Dignity", or medical aid in dying. This year HB 886 and SB 359, once again, introduce this subject. As of January 20, there have been 1,457 bills filed by Virginia's House of representatives(HB) and 821 by the senate(SB). We encourage you to learn more and to contact your elected representatives with your concerns.

To track legislation, visit the Virginia.gov Legislative Information System (LIS). There is another useful site, "Who's My Legislator" that provides information on how to contact your legislators and more information, including legislation they have presented.

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