

PRESS RELEASE: For immediate release

Death, Dollars and Due Diligence: Educating Consumers for 60 years.

March 14, 2022. Local Funeral Consumers Alliance group celebrates 60th anniversary.

Greenfield, MA. March 7, 2022. The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts (FCAWM) announces 60 years of service helping people understand options and make informed choices about funeral and memorial arrangements. Originally incorporated as the Springfield Memorial Society on March 14, 1962, this volunteer-run non-profit gradually expanded its reach to serve all four counties of Western Massachusetts. Today FCAWM continues the original mission of protecting a consumer's right to choose meaningful, dignified, and affordable final arrangements.

On this 60th anniversary, FCAWM volunteers are engaged in a new price comparison study of funeral home services in Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, and Berkshire counties. Results will be posted in a Price Comparison Chart on the organization's website this summer, updating the previous comparison completed in 2020. For decades FCAWM has conducted and shared these biennial surveys to inform the public. FCAWM is not affiliated with or sponsored by the funeral industry.

A major overhaul of the FCAWM website (www.funeralconsumersawmass.org) was completed this winter. The website's new search function makes it easier to find information on specific topics, such as cemeteries, shrouds, cremation, body donation, or home death care. There are sections on state and federal consumers rights, tips for saving money, advice about prepaying, and news of developing trends in green options for final disposition.

FCAWM volunteers are available to give presentations (virtual or in-person) to community groups. They also produce a newsletter twice a year and organize an educational program each October. Volunteers respond to questions from the public, often helping to calm and reassure a distressed caller who, confronted with the sudden death of a loved one, was baffled about next steps.

FCAWM recommends that all consumers exercise due diligence when considering final arrangements: Think about options ahead of time. Know your legal rights. Shop around, and avoid expensive extras. Communicate your wishes to your next of kin.

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FCAWM is an affiliate of the national [Funeral Consumers Alliance](http://www.funeralconsumersalliance.org) and, in Massachusetts, collaborates with the FCA of Eastern Massachusetts, which serves Central and Eastern counties (see map and links at funeralsma.org).