

# Cultural Competency and Haitian Immigrants

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## Death Rituals

- When death is impending, the entire family will gather, pray, cry, and use religious medallions or other spiritual artifacts.<sup>29, 30, 31, 32</sup>
- When a person dies, the entire extended family is affected. The oldest family member makes all the arrangements and notifies the family. The body is kept until the entire family can gather.<sup>15, 29, 30, 31, 32</sup>
- The last bath is usually given by a family member.<sup>29, 30</sup>
- Organ donation is not viewed as an option. Cremation also is not considered since the body is thought to be necessary for resurrection.<sup>29, 30</sup>
- Haitians prefer to die at home, although the hospital is acceptable.<sup>29, 30</sup>
- Autopsy is allowed in certain circumstances. If it is thought that the death was a result of maleficence, an autopsy may be requested. An autopsy may also be requested to ensure that the body is actually dead and not a [zombie](#). The notion of Zombies seems to be more prevalent with rural Haitians than with urban residents. Zombies are created as a result of greed or malevolence.<sup>29, 30</sup>

Mourning practices include *veye*, *dernier priye*, and *prise de deuil*. *Veye* are preburial activities. *Dernier priye* is a 7 day home based ritual consisting of 7 days of prayer. This process is to help the soul pass into the next world. *Prise de deuil* takes place on the 7<sup>th</sup> day and is similar to a funeral. This begins the official mourning period.<sup>29, 30</sup>

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