

<b>Institutional Handbook of Operating Procedures Policy 09.15.11</b>	
Section: Clinical Policies	Responsible Vice President: Executive Vice President and CEO UTMB Health System
Subject: End of Life Policies	Responsible Entity: Adult Patient Care Services

**I. Title**

*COVID-19 End -Of-Life Body Handling*

**II. Policy and Procedures**

**Preparing the body for transfer from a patient room to the morgue**

- 1) Notify nursing manager/COA of the death including diagnosis.
- 2) Ensure death paperwork is completed and signed by COA/ED charge nurse (as applicable) prior to transporting decedent and/or contacting transportation services.
- 3) On Galveston campus, notify transportation department of the COVID diagnosis.
- 4) The COA will provide unit staff with a body bag (if not available on unit) for patients with suspected or positive for COVID.
- 5) Personnel who interact with the body don PPE for extended respiratory precautions.
- 6) No tubes/lines are discontinued. Endotracheal tubes are clamped or place a plastic baggie over the top then tape. All other tubes and lines remain per usual protocol.
- 7) Ensure that any body fluids leaking from orifices are contained; cover the decedent's face, but especially nasal and oral cavities to contain any secretions (example- paper towels, secured with light tape).
- 8) Keep both the movement and handling of the body to a minimum.
- 9) Move the body to a body bag and transfer as soon as possible to the morgue:
  - a. Transfer decedent to body bag;
  - b. Wipe the external bag with hospital-grade disinfectant (e.g. caviwipes);
  - c. The body bag is labeled with an extended respiratory precaution isolation sign;
  - d. Transfer to morgue; on Angleton Danbury campus, the body would remain in the room until transported to Galveston via normal transportation for autopsy services.
- 10) Once the body has been delivered to the morgue, wipe down the transport cart with hospital-grade disinfectant per usual protocol.

- 11) In the event the body will be picked up by the funeral home, they will be notified of suspected COVID -19 before decedent is released, so that funeral home may take special precautions.
- 12) Terminal room cleaning must be performed per approved COVID protocol.

**Autopsy Services**

- 1.) UTMB autopsy services will perform postmortem examinations when authorized on decedents with suspected or tested positive for COVID-19. UTMB meets/exceeds CDC standards for autopsy procedures on COVID decedents.
- 2.) A minimum number of personnel will participate in the autopsy; no students will participate in COVID autopsies.
- 3.) The autopsy is performed in the small isolation suite if possible, for ease of cleaning.
- 4.) Required PPE includes gown, plastic apron, sleeve covers, foot covers, double gloves, face shields, and either N-95 or PAPR. PAPR with HEPA filter is used for extended autopsy procedures.
- 5.) Autopsy table, surface, walls, and floor are decontaminated with cavicide or 1:10 bleach solution.
- 6.) Funeral home will be notified of suspected COVID -19 before decedent is released, so that funeral home may take special precautions.

**III. Dates Approved or Amended**

<i>Originated: 04/20/2020</i>	
<i>Reviewed with Changes</i>	<i>Reviewed without Changes</i>

**IV. Contact Information**

Adult Patient Care Services  
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