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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Originated: 04/20/2020</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reviewed with Changes</td>
<td>Reviewed without Changes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IV. Contact Information

Adult Patient Care Services
409-266-7966