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Highlands Ranch Hospital

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| **Operational Workflow:**  **Elective Adult or Fetal Autopsy**  **(Non-Coroner Autopsy)** | |
| **Effective Date:** 06/2022 | **Replaces: N/A** |
|  | **Operational Workflow Owner:**  HRH Pathology |

**Purpose:**

Define steps in the process to request a non-coroner autopsy by the:

1. Physician, and/or
2. Family/legal next of kin (through the physician)

**Scope:**

Highlands Ranch Hospital

Responsibility:

House Supervisor: coordinates process

Lab: calls the courier

Pathology: obtains Pathology submitted specimens as appropriate (i.e. placenta for fetal demise)

**Operational Workflow Details**

1. **Request for Autopsy**
   1. Once all other elements of the referenced policies have been addressed including, but not limited to, the Coroner having released the case declining to take jurisdiction, an autopsy can be requested.
      * 1. Notify the physician and house supervisor of the request
        2. Obtain signed authorization from the legal next of kin
        3. Obtain direction from the legal next of kin regarding funeral home arrangements. Arrangement must be made prior to the transport for the off-site autopsy.
2. **Adult Autopsy**
   1. The funeral home will be used to transport the body to the location of the Pathologist performing the autopsy.
      * 1. Contact the contracted autopsy Pathologist:
           1. Adult Autopsy Pathologist – Dr. John Carver: cell 720-289-1843, email [jdcarver@gmail.com](mailto:jdcarver@gmail.com)
           2. The Pathologist needs to be provided the contact information for the funeral home to use for transport post-autopsy
3. **Fetal Autopsy**
4. Fetal autopsies are performed at **Children’s hospital**. Follow steps for handling.
   1. Neonates/fetuses may remain on the unit with the mother.
      1. The unit will need to contact the House Supervisor when transport to the morgue is needed.
   2. The neonate/fetus will be logged into the morgue for tracking.
   3. Place neonate/fetus in a leak proof wrapping/infant body bag/bereavement container, or baby casket prior to the pick-up from the courier.
   4. For fetal demise, the House Supervisor should request from Pathology that the placenta with the Surgical Pathology requisition be delivered to the morgue.
      1. Pathology will package the placenta according to appropriate containment and labelling for formalin, biologics, and liquid prior to bringing the specimen to the morgue.
      2. Pathology will sign-in the placenta on the morgue log.
      3. Pathology will contact the House Supervisor when the packaged placenta is brought to the morgue.
   5. The House Supervisor will call Children’s Pathology to inform them of an autopsy being sent.
      1. Children’s Pathology: **720-777-6711**
      2. Questions asked by the Pathology department:
         1. When is courier expected to come?
         2. How is the body being transported?
         3. Is the placenta being sent (fetal demise)?
         4. Is the signed release complete?
         5. Will the body need to be returned to HRH?
         6. Children’s may request the mothers COVID results as appropriate.
   6. The House Supervisor will collect the following paperwork and send to Children’s by fax and by sending paper copies with the body.
      1. Fax paperwork prior to delivery: **720-777-7119**
      2. If the autopsy is physician ordered, print the order from EPIC (Family/next of kin can request an autopsy without a physician order).
      3. Signed disposition permit
      4. Patient H&P
   7. The House Supervisor should contact the lab to order a stat courier once everything is packaged and ready.
      1. The courier service will transport to Children’s Hospital and back to HRH for final disposition chosen by family.
      2. Request Lab to coordinate transport with the courier service
      3. Lab will ask the courier to pick up the fetus/neonate at dock and inform the dock staff to call the house supervisor when they arrive.
      4. The House Supervisor will meet the courier at the dock and walk them to the morgue.
      5. House Supervisor will sign out the body and the placenta (fetal demise) from the morgue.
   8. Children’s will reach out to the House Supervisor when the autopsy is complete. The House Supervisor should contact the HRH lab to order a stat courier to bring the body back to HRH for final disposition per the disposition permit.

**Contact Information:**

Children’s Hospital of Colorado Pathology

720-777-6714 Monday-Friday 0800-1700.

If autopsy is requested on a weekend, the House Supervisor will call on Monday morning.

**Definitions:**

**Fetal Autopsy**: for the purpose of this operating process, the term fetal autopsy refers to a stillbirth, spontaneous abortion, or fetal demise.

**Neonate**: a newborn from birth to 4 weeks

**Stillbirth**: The death is indicated when the fetus does not breathe or show any evidence of life such as a beating heart. This does not include induced termination of pregnancy

**Fetus:** 12 weeks’ gestation until birth

**Embryos**: 11 weeks’, 6 days or less

**References:**

UCHealth Policy: *Inpatient Declaration of Death and Post Mortem Care*