

Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance	
1. Clinical Policies and Procedures	Original Issue Date: December 29, 1995
Death of Patient - Care and Management	Review/Effective Date: October 22, 2019
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SCOPE

This policy applies to all Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA) staff who are involved in the care and management of the body following the death of a patient.

POLICY

This policy describes the care and management of a body following death of a patient at HPHA.

PURPOSE:

To provide direction to staff regarding the care of a patient following death and the management of subsequent processes.

PROCEDURE:

Procedure – Documentation and Communication Following Patient Death	Rationale
<p>Confirm that death has occurred based on any combination of the following criteria and document actions and tests used to verify death on the patient record:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed, dilated and unresponsive pupils • No respirations • No audible heartbeat • No carotid pulse • No response to painful stimuli • No activity on ECG confirmed in at least 2 leads • No Blood Pressure • No activity on EEG <p>NOTE: Nurses (RNs and RPNs) are permitted to pronounce patient death providing they have the knowledge, skill and judgement to do so and are aware of the legislation that impacts their practice. As a physician/Nurse Practitioner (NP) is required to complete the Certificate of Death, the Most Responsible Person at the time of death is to complete the Certificate of Death.</p> <p>With a death by Medical Assistance in Dying, pronouncement of death is by the Provider Physician/NP.</p>	<p>Accurate documentation</p> <p>CNO Standard: Decisions About Procedures and Authority</p>
<p>Provide support to family if present. Spiritual Care Services are offered and cultural and/or religious customs are observed and accommodated to the extent possible.</p> <p>Every attempt will be made to allow family to remain with the patient for as long as possible prior to release to the</p>	<p>Promotes patient centred care</p> <p>Provides emotional support</p>

<p>morgue or funeral home.</p> <p>Ensure that the wishes of the patient (if known) and the family regarding release of the body are carried out in a compassionate and efficient manner.</p> <p>NOTE: Family/contact persons are permitted to view the deceased on the nursing unit prior to release to the Funeral Home if possible unless this is a Coroner's case (hyperlink to Deaths in Hospital Requiring a Coroner)</p>	
<p>Record actual time of death on Death Checklist for a Hospitalized Patient (Forms on-Line GE0017)</p>	<p>Accurate documentation</p>
<p>Notify MRP, if not present at time of death; if after hours, physician providing coverage will be notified and MRP will be notified at appropriate time.</p>	<p>Continuity of patient care and communication</p>
<p>Notify Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all deaths meeting the referral indicators for high risk of imminent death and with final time of death if directed by TGLN (hyperlink to Organ and Tissue Donation Procedure - Stratford Site Only policy) • Within one hour of death for patients who do not meet the referral indicators for high risk imminent death • Document notification and the patient specific TGLN number on the Death Checklist if applicable • NOTE: Care of the body following the post organ recovery process follows the same care and management process as below 	
<p>Confirm with MRP if an autopsy is to be performed</p> <p>Note: In the event of a Coroner's Case, a physician's decision not to have an autopsy can be overruled by the Coroner</p> <p>Hyperlink Deaths in Hospital Requiring a Coroner</p> <p>If an autopsy is not required, obtain an order from the MRP to release the body to the Funeral Home.</p>	<p>Continuity of patient care</p>
<p>Confirm with MRP if he/she or nursing will notify the patient's family/significant other of the death.</p> <p>The professional speaking with the Substitute Decision Maker (SDM), next of kin, family and/or individual with Power of Attorney-Personal Care will inquire regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • religious and/or cultural customs • any specific instructions or requests from the family regarding preparation of the body for release to the Funeral Home • Funeral Home if not known. Nursing will document funeral home on the Death Checklist. <p>Inform family/contact person of their responsibility to contact the Funeral Home.</p>	<p>Continuity of patient care and communication</p> <p>Promotes patient and family centred-care Assists with the grieving process of family members</p> <p>Accurate documentation in patient record.</p>