



### MedStar Policy for Handling of Remains of Patients Infected with COVID-19 or Persons Under Investigation (PUI)

**Purpose:** To establish the standards on handling and management of remains of patients known to have SARS-2-CoV-19 infection (COVID-19) or to be PUI.

**Definitions:** Any terms/ abbreviations that need explanation

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| COVID-19 Infection | Patient with a documented positive/detected result upon PCR testing for the SARS-2-CoV-19 virus  |
| PUI                | Patient with clinical symptoms raising suspicion for COVID-19 infection who either has not yet been tested or has not yet had a test result reported |

#### A. Post mortem disposition and Autopsy

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| 1 | <p>All deaths related to confirmed SARS-2-CoV-19 or a PUI are considered natural deaths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These deaths do not routinely fall under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiners.</li> <li>• Medical Examiners may opt to accept a body in certain circumstances which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Early or “index” cases</li> <li>○ Cases that may have significant public health implications (ie. Nursing home resident, teacher, etc.)</li> <li>○ Cases that fall under standard ME jurisdiction and coincidentally have confirmed COVID-19 or are a PUI</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| 2 | <p>Maryland State Medical Examiner’s Office: 410-333-3250<br/> District of Columbia Medical Examiner’s Office: 202-698-9000</p>   |
| 3 | <p>Do <b>NOT</b> offer or request autopsies on confirmed deaths due to COVID-19.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MedStar hospitals will not perform autopsy examination on confirmed or suspected COVID-19 deaths due to environmental requirements and associate safety.</li> </ul>   |

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| 4 | <p>Most patients admitted for possible COVID-19 will have testing performed prior to death. However, if testing was not completed, MedStar hospitals may perform a “swab only” autopsy to obtain material for testing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use standard autopsy consenting protocol and form</li> <li>• Obtain permission from next of kin for autopsy restricted to “swab only exam”</li> <li>• Swabs will be obtained postmortem and submitted for testing.</li> <li>• Unrestricted or standard autopsies will not be performed</li> </ul> |
| 5 | Do not offer or allow viewings on ANY patients suspected of or having COVID-19.   |
| 6 | Encourage families to identify a funeral home as soon as possible to avoid prolonged storage of the deceased in the hospital morgue.  |

#### B. Post mortem handling of bodies

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| 1 | Full PPE should be worn when wrapping the body of a deceased COVID-19 patient or PUI.  |
|   | Follow the routine procedure for postmortem care.  |
| 2 | The body should be placed in a secure body bag/shroud. If there is concern of bag/shroud integrity, consider the use of double bags (two shrouds).   |
| 3 | After closing the outermost body bag/shroud, the external surface should be wiped down with a disinfectant from <i>EPA’s Registered Antimicrobial Products for Use Against Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2</i> (available on <a href="#">Starport</a> ). There is no need to turn the body around to wipe down the outside of the bottom of the bag/shroud. |
| 4 | From this point on, contact precautions are sufficient for handling of the remains.  |
| 5 | Once the body has been delivered to the morgue, the transport cart should be wiped down with a disinfectant from <i>EPA’s Registered Antimicrobial Products for Use Against Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2</i> (available on <a href="#">Starport</a> ).   |
| 6 | Once the body is released to the funeral home or medical examiner’s office, the morgue cart should be wiped down with a disinfectant from <i>EPA’s Registered Antimicrobial Products for Use Against Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2</i> (available on <a href="#">Starport</a> ).  |