

COMMUNITY HOSPITAL AUTOPSY CHECKLIST

PLEASE NOTE THAT IOWA PATHOLOGY ASSOCIATES, P.C. (IPA) WILL PERFORM AUTOPSY STUDIES UPON REQUEST FOR INPATIENT DEATHS WHICH OCCUR IN OUR AFFILIATED COMMUNITY HOSPITALS. IPA WILL NO LONGER PERFORM PRIVATE AUTOPSIES ON PATIENTS WHO DIE AT HOME OR IN NURSING HOMES. IPA DOES NOT PERFORM FORENSIC AUTOPSIES.

All autopsies are performed at the Iowa Methodist Medical Center (IMMC) morgue. Autopsies are performed Monday thru Friday and until noon on Saturday. Bodies for autopsy examination and relevant paperwork which arrive after noon on Saturday, on Sunday, or holidays will be held until the examination can be performed on the next regular working day. If you have questions, please call 515-241-6445 or 800-760-9333.

1) The responsible individual should complete and fax the current IPA *Request/or Autopsy* form and the *Physician Authorization* form to the IMMC medical secretaries at 515-241-8535. A faxed consent must include a signature by the closest living relative and driver's license or some other form of identification should be provided. An individual having financial power of attorney is not necessarily the closest living relative and is therefore not necessarily authorized to provide consent. It should be noted that financial power of attorney ceases when the subject dies.

2) The pathologist assistant (PA) or the pathologist assigned to autopsy service will contact the responsible individual to confirm the following:

- a. Ordering person understands the financial responsibility and approximate costs.
- b. The Request for Autopsy form has been completed in full and the permission section is signed by the closest living relative as indicated on the form.
- c. Indication has been made for the extent of the autopsy examination (complete, no head, etc.)
- d. Confirm that any specific questions to be addressed by the autopsy have been noted on the Physician Authorization Form.
- e. Make sure that all appropriate clinical records have been photocopied and sent with the body.
- f. Identify who is to receive copies of the autopsy report (Dr.'s, hospital, etc.) Please include complete mailing addresses.
- g. Identify the funeral home.

3) After the above forms are received, the pathologists' assistant, the IMMC pathology secretary, or the autopsy pathologist will contact the funeral home to confirm when the body will be delivered to the IMMC morgue.

4) The pathologist assistant, the diener, and the pathologist will coordinate the time of the autopsy examination and notify IMMC admissions to inform them of the autopsy so that they can notify the IMMC pathology secretaries when the body arrives.

5) The autopsy will be performed, appropriate tissues sampled, and other studies performed as indicated. Photographs will be obtained if warranted. The *pathologist* must indicate in the final report the number of microscopic blocks and all additional studies (i.e. cultures, toxicology, cytogenetics, special stains, etc.) for billing purposes.

- a. The funeral home will be contacted when the body can be released.
- b. All transcription, histology studies, and other special testing will be done at IMMC. The IMMC histopathology staff will register the case, assign a medical record number, and autopsy number.
- c. A preliminary report, whenever possible, will be issued within 2 business days.
- d. A final report, whenever possible, will be available within 30 working days and will be forwarded to the appropriate individuals/physicians/hospitals.

6) IPA will bill the responsible individual or hospital as indicated on the consent form for all services including those incurred at IMMC. IMMC medical secretaries should forward a copy of the Request For Autopsy form to Michelle Petersen at IPA.