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POLICY	Manual: Clinical	Section: Interdisciplinary Clinical	Code No.: I D015	Old Code No.: POLD15, I D15
<b>Title:</b> Death of a Patient			<b>Original Effective Date:</b> May 01, 1997	
			<b>Review/Revised Effective Date:</b> Oct 06, 2016	
			<b>Next Review Date:</b> Jan 01, 2018	
<b>Cross Index:</b> <a href="#">I D001, I D012</a>	<b>Authoring Committee/Program/Dept:</b> Chief of Nursing & Professional Practice		<b>Approved By:</b> AMC	

When a patient death occurs, Southlake Regional Health Centre acts in accordance with relevant legislation. Spiritual Care Services are offered and, to the extent possible under the circumstances, cultural and/or religious customs are observed and accommodated.

Resuscitation efforts must be in accordance with the completed Goals of Care form, or the [Goals of Care](#) policy and procedure in situations where the Form was not completed.

#### Definitions:

- Death: is considered to have occurred when the pupils are fixed and dilated and vital signs have ceased (i.e. absence of cardiac activity and respirations for one minute by auscultation)
- Expected Death:
  - Death is anticipated by the patient, family and health care team.
  - The death is planned for in a written care plan that has been discussed with the patient and others as appropriate
- Unexpected Death: death is not anticipated as per above

The following actions must be conducted whenever a patient death occurs:

Pronouncement of Death	EXPECTED DEATH	UNEXPECTED DEATH
	Pronouncement may be made by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physicians</li> <li>• Nurse Practitioners (NP)</li> <li>• Nurses* (to notify attending physician/NP after pronouncement)</li> </ul> *Nurses may only pronounce in cases where the patient's written care plan indicates "expected death" or "palliative" and DOES NOT include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pronouncement made by Physicians only</li> </ul>

	<p>resuscitation as indicated on the Resuscitation Status form. If this information and the form are not in the chart, the nurse contacts the primary care physician or NP to pronounce.</p> <p>Note: A nurse <b>may not</b> pronounce death in a patient whose death was a result of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID).</p>	
<b>Completion &amp; Signing of Death Certificate</b>	<b>EXPECTED DEATH</b>	<b>UNEXPECTED DEATH</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physician or physician delegate **</li> <li>NP* **</li> <li>Certificate must be completed within 12 hours of death</li> </ul> <p>*Nurse Practitioners can complete the medical certificate of death when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the NP had primary responsibility for the deceased's care</li> <li>the death was expected</li> <li>a documented medical diagnosis of a terminal disease had been made by a medical practitioner</li> <li>there was a predictable pattern of decline, and</li> <li>no unexpected events or complications arose.</li> </ul> <p>** Physicians and NPs <b>cannot</b> complete the death certificate of a patient whose death was a result of MAID; this can only be done by the coroner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physician or physician delegate (non-coroner cases only)</li> <li>The Coroner (coroner cases)</li> <li>Certificate must be completed within 12 hours of death</li> </ul>
<b>Notification of Family/ Next of Kin</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notification provided by nurses, physicians, or NPs</li> </ul>	
<b>Documentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per the <a href="#">Death of Patient - Documentation</a> procedure. The date and time of death is documented on the Physician Progress and Order Record and Interdisciplinary Progress Notes by the pronouncing health care professional.</li> </ul>	
<b>Organ and Tissue Donation Referral</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions and decisions relating to Organ and Tissue Donation are conducted as per the <a href="#">Organ and Tissue Donation</a> policy and <a href="#">Organ Tissue and Donation</a> procedure.</li> </ul>	
<b>Care of the Body</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Care of body following death to be provided as per the <a href="#">Death - Care of the Body</a> procedure.</li> </ul>	
<b>Notification of Coroner (when applicable)</b>	<p>Coroner's Notification</p> <p>Deaths occurring under the following circumstances must be reported immediately to the Coroner's Office:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a result of             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Violence,</li> <li>Misadventure,</li> <li>Negligence,</li> <li>Misconduct, or</li> <li>Malpractice;</li> </ol> </li> <li>As a result of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID);</li> </ol>	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. By Unfair means;</li> <li>4. During pregnancy or following pregnancy in circumstances that might reasonably be attributable thereto;</li> <li>5. Suddenly and unexpectedly;</li> <li>6. From disease or sickness for which he was not treated by a legally qualified medical practitioner;</li> <li>7. From any cause other than disease; or</li> <li>8. Under such circumstances as may require investigation,</li> <li>9. Where a person dies while resident or an inpatient in, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>children's residence</b> under Part IX (Licensing) of the Child and Family Services Act or premises approved under subsection 9 (1) of Part I (Flexible Services) of that Act;</li> <li>○ <b>a supported group living residence or an intensive support residence</b> under the Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008;</li> <li>○ <b>a psychiatric facility designated</b> under the Mental Health Act;</li> <li>○ <b>a public or private hospital</b> to which the person was transferred from a facility, institution or home referred</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Other circumstances are listed in the Coroners Act.</p> <p>Amended from the following Reference: Government of Ontario Coroner Act. June 1990 Chapter 93 Section 10(i).)</p> <p>Note: The Coroners Act is available in the Library or Health Records for reference and at the following link: <a href="http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90c37_e.htm#BK19">http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90c37_e.htm#BK19</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If unsure, the attending physician/physician's delegate contacts the Coroner directly for clarification.</li> <li>● Reference: Coroner's Act R.S.O. 1990, Chapter C.37 <a href="http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90c37_e.htm">http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90c37_e.htm</a></li> </ul>
<b>Request for Autopsy (when applicable)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The attending physician/physician delegate/Coroner determines the need for autopsy (refer to <a href="#">Death of a Patient - Completion of Documents</a> procedure - Table 2 Arrangement of Autopsy).</li> <li>● The family may also direct a request for an autopsy to the physician (or Coroner when necessary).</li> </ul>

#### References:

- [College of Nurses of Ontario: Guidance on Nurses' Roles in Medical Assistance in Dying, June 23 2016](#)
- College of Nurses of Ontario (2011) Nurse Practitioner Resources <http://www.cno.org/en/learn-about-standards-guidelines/educational-tools/nurse-practitioners/np-practice-resources/>
- Coroner's Act [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_90c37\\_e.htm#BK14](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90c37_e.htm#BK14)
- Nursing Association of New Brunswick (2014) *Registered Nurses Pronouncing Death* <http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/NANB-PositionStatement-RegisteredNursesPronouncingDeath-E.pdf>
- Public Hospital Act, Regulation 965 (2011) [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws\\_regs\\_900965\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_900965_e.htm)
- Vital Statistics Act, Regulation 1094 (2011) [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws\\_regs\\_901094\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_901094_e.htm)