



# Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

## DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

### CLINICAL

### POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**SUBJECT: DEATH: RECORDS AND NOTIFICATION**

**Policy No.:** C113.11  
**Effective Date:** 12/1988  
**Page:** 1 of 2

**PURPOSE:** To define the process and responsibilities to ensure:

1. There are completed records regarding a patient's death.
2. Concerned persons and departments are notified and the body is released to the mortuary, in a timely manner.

**PHYSICIAN ORDER REQUIRED:** No

**PERFORMED BY:** RN

#### **POLICY STATEMENTS:**

1. The physician pronounces the patient dead, establishes the time of death, and completes the death certificate.  
**Key Point:** The physician is responsible to inform the "person to notify" as identified in the medical records, or the next-of-kin of the patient's death. If unable to contact "person to notify" or next-of-kin, the unit's Social Worker or Patient Advocate is to be contacted by Hospital Charge or unit staff to assist.
2. The physician may request an autopsy, if indicated. If this is a Coroner's Case, see Nursing Policy C113.10 – Post Mortem Care. For definition of Coroner's Case, see back of death certificate.
3. The unit staff will discharge the patient from the electronic medical record.
4. The Registered Nurse will:
  - A. Verify patient's request regarding organ or tissue donation in the medical record.
  - B. Report all deaths and imminent deaths to the organ procurement agency within one hour as described in Hospital Administrative Policy and Procedure B515 - Organ/Tissue Donor Protocol and document the confirmation in the expiration record.**Key Point:** Immediate notification to receiving organizations is essential if organs are to be harvested for donation.
5. In addition to the organ procurement agency in #4 above, deaths are reported by Hospital Charge or unit staff to:
  - A. Decedent Affairs Office, Health Information Management (HIM)
  - B. Hospital morgue in Pathology Lab
  - C. Pharmacy
  - D. The Administrative Nursing Supervisor on duty after business hours and on weekends and Holidays.
  - E. Clergy, upon request from the family
  - F. The Coroner's Office – notification by the physician for Coroner's Case only
6. For all forms required for notification, including the release of body from morgue, refer to the unit's "Office of Decedent Affairs" binder. Update binder if needed.  
**Key Point:** The Morgue requires these forms to be completed by the next-of-kin prior to releasing of the body to a private mortuary.

## DOCUMENTATION

1. Physician will complete the Death Notice, Autopsy Consent (if indicated), and Coroner's paperwork if indicated.
  2. The RN will record all pertinent data in the expiration record within EHR.
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**Reviewed by:** Dulce Dones, MSN, RN

### References:

Brooks EG, Reed KD. Principles and Pitfalls: a Guide to Death Certification. *Clin Med Res.* 2015 Jun;13 (2):74-82; quiz 83-4. doi: 10.3121/cmr.2015.1276. PMID: 26185270; PMCID: PMC4504663.

Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center. (2018). Administrative Policy B515 - *Organ/Tissue Donor Protocol*

Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center. (20120). Nursing Policy and Procedure C113.10, *Death: Post-Mortem Care.*

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12/88 – Revised  
11/90 – Revised  
03/97 – Revised  
05/00 – Revised  
06/01 – Revised  
02/04 – Reviewed  
02/07 – Revised  
01/11 – Revised  
12/13 – Revised  
10/16 – Revised  
10/19 – Revised  
10/22 - Reviewed