



Los Angeles County Department of Health Services

Policy & Procedure Title:		DHS After Death Care Culturally Sensitive Nursing Policy	
Category:	300-399 Operation Policy	Policy No.:	311.103
Originally Issued:	6/11/2013	Update (U)/Revised (R):	10/08/2014 (U)
DHS Division/Unit of Origin:	Office of Nursing Affairs		
Policy Contact – Employee Name, Title and DHS Division:			
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Distribution: DHS-wide	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If not DHS-wide, other distribution:	

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure culturally sensitive care and nursing actions are provided to the decedent and associated individuals.

DEFINITION(S):

Associated Individuals: Family members, significant others and friends.

Culturally Sensitive: Consideration and recognition of decedent and associated individuals' diverse cultural, spiritual, psychological, and ritual needs associated with death. This pertains to interactions and/or interventions with the associated individuals following the death, in a manner sensitive to and respectful of the decedents' and associated individuals' cultural needs.

Decedent: Any individual at any age throughout the entire life cycle (perinatal through geriatrics) who dies in the clinical area after arrival or who is brought to the clinical area post mortem.

POLICY:

The care and treatment of a decedent will be handled in a respectful, culturally sensitive manner within the Department of Health Services (DHS) clinical areas. All reasonable efforts will be provided to accommodate the religious, spiritual, cultural, psychological needs, beliefs and practices of the decedent and that of the associated individuals, taking in consideration the needs and rights of other patients.

PROCEDURE:

The mission of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services is to ensure access to high-quality, patient-centered, cost-effective health care to Los Angeles County residents through direct services at DHS facilities and through collaboration with community and university partners.

Revision/Review Dates:
 Department Head/Designee Approval: **Signature on File**

1. Identify a room when feasible to sequester the decedent away from patient care areas and ensure privacy and confidentiality.
2. Notify individual(s) listed as primary contact(s) or an identified associated individual if available.
3. Notify administrative and clinical leaders (Executive Management, Nursing Administration, Nursing, Medical, and Decedent Affairs Office) as appropriate.
4. Assess and evaluate the needs of associated individuals present at the time of the death.
5. Approach and communicate with the decedent's family and associated individuals in a professional, culturally sensitive manner.
6. Notify Clinical Social Services as needed or as requested.
7. Complete the required post death documentation.
8. Notify organ procurement, if applicable.
9. Follow the facility's individual policy and procedure to secure, handle and disposition the decedent's personal property.
10. Follow the facility's individual policies and procedures on post mortem care.
11. Deliver post mortem care in a culturally sensitive manner taking into consideration the cultural, spiritual, psychological and ritual needs of the decedent and associated individuals.
12. Follow the facility's individual policies and procedures if an autopsy is required, requested, and/or clinically indicated.
13. Contact coroner and/or mortuary if applicable.

CULTURALLY SENSITIVE PROCESS:

Every effort will be made to accommodate the cultural, spiritual, psychological, and ritual needs of the decedent and the associated individual(s). The associated individual(s) will be granted an opportunity to express their grief in a compassionate environment.

1. Offer to place associated individuals in a private area, if available.
2. Notify Clinical Social Services, as needed and/or as requested, for bereavement resources.

DISPOSITION OF DECEDENT:

The decedent and associated individuals', cultural, spiritual, psychological rituals, and beliefs will be taken into consideration when possible. Reasonable effort will be made to be culturally sensitive as disposition of the decedent is carried out:

1. Disposition of the decedent within one hour from verification of death.
2. If there are anticipated delays with the disposition of the decedent, the Nurse Manager and/or Nursing Supervisor must be notified for further direction (refer to facility post mortem care of the decedent policy and procedure).
3. Every effort will be made to accommodate the cultural, spiritual, psychological, and ritual needs of the decedent and the associated individual(s).

REFERENCES/AUTHORITY:

The Joint Commission Standards, Rights and Responsibilities of the Individual RI.01.01.01
EPs 4, 6, and 9

The Joint Commission Standards, Leadership LD.04.03.01