

## **AUTOPSY** **Sioux Falls, SD**

### **INTRODUCTION**

An autopsy is a pathologic examination of a portion or the entirety of a deceased individual's body. Autopsies are a valuable means of determining cause of death plus determining whether other significant, possibly clinically unsuspected, diseases exist. An autopsy does not prevent viewing of the body in an open casket ceremony and can be limited to any degree requested by the family, even to the point of needle biopsy only.

### **AUTOPSY ORDERING GUIDELINES**

We offer a full range of autopsy services. The autopsies performed are generally divided into two main categories - autopsies done for hospital deaths and autopsies done for forensic or medicolegal reasons. Hospital autopsies are usually ordered by a decedent's family while forensic autopsies are usually ordered by county medical examiners or coroners.

To obtain either a hospital or a forensic autopsy we suggest that our clients initially contact one of the pathology assistants (P.A.s) or the P.A. on call, if after hours. The P.A. will make the necessary arrangements and schedule the autopsy. The P.A. will contact the forensic pathologist (Dr. Randall) for more complicated forensic cases, or the client may choose to contact the forensic pathologist directly.

As a rule, most of the hospital autopsies are performed in the local community by the P.A. Many forensic cases (i.e., those with little potential for criminal or legal ramification) will also be performed locally by the P.A. After consultation with the pathologist, however, a P.A. may request that the autopsy be done in Sioux Falls. The client also can always request that any autopsy be performed directly by a pathologist. With rare exceptions, autopsies performed by a pathologist will be done at the Sioux Valley Hospital morgue in Sioux Falls.

Although we suggest complete autopsies, we are happy to perform partial autopsies, including brain retrievals for dementia studies. Complete autopsies are always recommended for all forensic autopsies. Partial autopsies of forensic cases of definite criminal or legal concern will not be done.

Autopsy reports will be given only to the parties authorizing and/or paying for an autopsy. We require a release from those individuals prior to disseminating autopsy results to other individuals or agencies.

We welcome death scene investigation and other forensic consultation requests. These consultation requests should be made directly to the forensic pathologist or to the P.A. on call.

## **AUTOPSY MANKATO, MN**

**INTRODUCTION** This procedure is to be used in notifying pathologists of an autopsy that has been requested by a physician, family member, or medical examiner/coroner.

The most expedient and easiest way to facilitate an autopsy is to directly have the attending physician or medical examiner/coroner call the pathologist at Immanuel-St. Joseph's Hospital during routine hours at (507) 345-2626. After hours, the pathologist on call can be requested either from the Immanuel-St. Joseph's Hospital laboratory (at the above number) or the LCM Pathologists answering service (507) 625-2646. Then direct exchange of information can occur from the attending physician/medical examiner/coroner and the pathologist. Below are some additional general guidelines that may be helpful in requesting autopsies.

**DEATH AT A HOSPITAL** - A consent form should be signed for the autopsy by the nearest relative. Nearest relatives are defined as: 1. Spouse, 2. Parent, and 3. Sons and Daughters, in that respective order. The consent should also indicate whether the autopsy is limited in any fashion.

Most often hospital cases can be embalmed before proceeding with the autopsy and this can be discussed with the funeral home. In selected cases such as suspected drug overdose, certain infectious diseases, or other unusual situations, the post mortem exam must be conducted in an unembalmed state. Currently all autopsies are done at Immanuel-St. Joseph's Hospital morgue and transportation is provided by area funeral homes.

Billing for hospital autopsies is back to the requesting hospital, unless a different arrangement has been made.

We will honor family requests for autopsies, but will need to discuss the billing with a representative of the family.

For medical examiner/coroner cases, it is critically important for the local medical examiner/coroner to discuss the case with us to see if we can handle the case in Mankato. We are willing to accept most of the medical examiner/coroner cases except for the following situations:

1. Homicide or suspected homicide
2. Unidentified body

In these special circumstances of homicide or suspected homicide, or identified body, we feel the post mortem examination should be done by a forensic pathologist, which is available from the LCM Pathologists out of Sioux Falls or the forensic pathologists in the Twin Cities.

### **PROCEDURE FOR NOTIFYING THE PATHOLOGIST DURING ROUTINE BUSINESS WORKING HOURS.**

Monday through Friday, 0800 hours through 1630 hours.

The pathologist can be reached at Immanuel-St. Joseph's Hospital, Department of Pathology at (507) 345-2626. The following information should be readily available for the pathologist.

- A. Name of deceased
- B. Age of deceased
- C. Major diagnosis
- D. Name of requesting physician or medical examiner/coroner
- E. Funeral home and telephone number
- F. A note to whether the consent form is signed by next of kin

In the evening and early morning hours, i.e. 1630 hours through 0800 hours and on weekends, it is best to discuss the autopsy directly with the pathologist on call. The pathologist on call can be identified by calling the Immanuel-St. Joseph's Hospital Laboratory technician who will give you the pathologist on call pager number and home phone number.

Please feel free to call us directly, as we would prefer direct calls, if possible, from the requesting physician or medical examiner/coroner.