

Autopsy Service Changes for Products of Conception, Fetal Demise, Neonatal Deaths

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The autopsy service and surgical pathology at UVMMC have made significant changes to the processing of the above cases as delineated below:

FETAL DEATHS/ PRODUCTS OF CONCEPTION LESS THAN 20 WEEKS ESTIMATED GESTATIONAL AGE (EGA)*:

- These cases will be assigned to surgical pathology.
- An external examination will be performed.
- A gross examination of the internal chest and abdominal organs will be performed. No microscopic sections will be obtained unless a gross abnormality is detected.
- A routine placenta examination will be performed with microscopic sections obtained.
- There is no examination of the brain; the skull will not be opened.
- Tissue for cytogenetics will be obtained if requested.
- ***If there is signed autopsy consent by next of kin, regardless of age or weight, the case will be transferred to the autopsy service and a complete postmortem examination will be performed by a pediatric pathologist.**

*In the event that the EGA is unknown, less than 400 grams will be used to categorize.

FETAL DEATHS GREATER THAN OR EQUAL TO 20 WEEKS EGA* OR LIVE BORN (BREATH TAKEN):

- These cases will be sent to the morgue with the placenta
- If accompanied by a **signed consent for autopsy by legal next of kin**, a complete pre/perinatal autopsy will be performed by a pediatric pathologist including gross photographs, radiographs, external and internal examination of the chest, abdomen, and brain with microscopic sections and placental gross and microscopic examination. A complete autopsy report will be generated.
- If there is **no signed autopsy consent by legal next of kin**, there will be no examination of the remains (handled in a similar fashion to an adult hospital death without consent for autopsy).
- Tissue for cytogenetics will be obtained if requested or indicated by the gross examination.

*In the event that the EGA is unknown, greater than or equal to 400 grams will be used to categorize.

There may be instances when the parents request an autopsy after the case is processed as a surgical pathology case. The case can be re-examined as a pediatric autopsy case if a signed autopsy consent form by from the next of kin is received within three weeks of the surgical case being signed out.

If a non-natural death is a consideration clinically, then the Medical Examiner's office should be contacted.

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