Policy Updates 4/13/2020

**Post Mortem Care of the COVID/PUI patient**

I. Purpose: To prepare the body prior to viewing, autopsy, or release to a New York State Funeral Director.

II. General Content:

A. The attending/covering physician will be notified of the patient's death and must come in or give an order for a Patient Care Coordinator (PCC), Unit Director (UD), Assistant Director (AD), Clinical Operations Supervisor (COS) or a Registered Nurse (RN), who has been competenced to pronounce death. **NOTE:** If attending physician is not on call, ask covering physician if they will sign the death certificate, and designate who will be certifying on the post-mortem notes.

B. The family members, significant others, or nursing home shall be notified of the patient's death.

C. Refer to Organ Procurement Policy found in the Administrative Policies & Procedures Manual entitled “The Procurement of Organ and Tissue Donation at CVPH”.

D. For any patient who is not having an autopsy, remove all external equipment (i.e., IV line, chest tubes, foleys, drains). Catheters and tubes under the skin are left in place.

E. If the patient is to have an autopsy, clamp and secure all lines and tubes that are left in the body.

F. Post- Mortem care of COVID/PUI patient.

   Clean the immediate environment around the body and remove unneeded medical equipment from the room once cleaned

   Unless instructed to leave in place for autopsy or other assessments remove indwelling devices such as urinary catheters, endotracheal tubes, and IV access devices according to the facility protocol

   Bathe the body to remove all secretions, wound drainage (remove any soiled dressing and replace with clean dressing if necessary). Wash the body with dignity, including the full body and face.

   Place the body in a clean gown, then wrapped in a clean sheet.

   **See section L. for detailed post-mortem care and transfer of the COVID-19/PUI patient.**
NOTE: Post Mortem Care is performed according to Standard Precautions. Ensure that personnel who interact with the body apply standard precaution according to the WHO (2020) including hand hygiene before and after interaction with the body, and the environment; use PPE according to the level of interaction with the body. Personnel should use gown, eye protection shield or goggles, and mask. Use a N95 masks for patients that have had aerosol procedure within 3 hours.

G. Refer to the “Notification of Coroner of a Death” policy regarding mandated autopsy.

H. Record communicable disease alert in the post-mortem notes.

I. Complete post-mortem notes (document is either electronic or paper copy). For paper copy, keep top sheet and send yellow and pink copies to the Resource Center.

J. Consider spiritual needs and accommodate whenever possible

K. Transport body to the morgue using standard precautions. Clean equipment and perform hand hygiene.

L. Post-Mortem Care of the COVID19/PUI patient

Who: Staff involved with post-mortem care

When: During post-mortem care (bathing/cleaning the body, transporting the body to morgue)

Process:

- **Complete post-mortem care:**
  - Wear appropriate PPE while bathing/washing body
  - Place new clean gown on the body
  - Use new clean sheet to wrap body
  - Tape the sheet closed per usual post-mortem care
  - Use a second fitted sheet to wrap the body with a pink incontinence pad under patient (to prevent bodily fluids from leaking through the sheet)

- **Transport body to morgue:**
  - Use a thermal blanket as substitute for the blue cloth stretcher cover (At this time VERY minimal family members are in the facility to see transport to the morgue)
  - Transport the body to the morgue, staff will wear clean gloves, goggles and a surgical mask. (Gowns and gloves will be located in yellow isolation cart near the morgue)
  - Transfer body into the morgue
  - Place sheet and blanket that was used to cover the body on the morgue stretcher in appropriate linen bin near the morgue (label top of linen bin with our Covid/PUI specific isolation sign)
  - Doff dirty gloves, WASH HANDS
- Use disinfect spray on morgue stretcher (disinfectant spray will be placed near the morgue on top of yellow isolation cart). Saturate the stretcher and allow to air dry in the morgue.
- Close and lock the morgue door
- WASH HANDS
- Doff PPE per protocol
- Place PPE in appropriate labeled trash bin or linen bin near the morgue (trash bin should have cover)
- WASH HANDS

RN make sure to put in post mortem note that the patient is Covid + / PUI

References:
Schub T; Pravikoff D; CINAHL Nursing Guide, EBSCO Publishing, 2019 Jan 11 (Skill Competency Checklist)