DECEDEDNT CARE SERVICES

Hours:  
Mon – Fri  7am - 3pm  
Sat./Sun – 7am - 7pm

After hours:  
Follow current procedures by utilizing: Nurse, HUC, MIM, Transport, Hospital Police, etc.)

Office number:  966-4541  
Cell number:  923-1958  
Pager:  123-5579  
Fax:  843-6717

Decedent Care Coordinator:  Pam Thorner  
Decedent Care Representative:  Heidi Dodson

Schedule:  
Pam - Mon-Fri  
Heidi – Thurs-Sun

Response to Calls:  We will attend any death in the hospital, as our schedule allows.  
Multiple deaths will limit our response.

The purpose of our new Decedent Care Service is to eliminate unnecessary steps involved in processing a deceased patient, to ensure the correct information is gathered at the time of a death, and to save time for the hospital staff so they can continue with ongoing patient care.

We will:

- Meet and greet with the hospital staff and family members at the time of death, on the floor, to obtain the patients background.

- Talk with the physicians to ensure the proper terminology is used on the death certificate and all related paperwork that is involved in a death is complete and properly filled out (i.e. autopsy request form and out-of-state burial-transit form); this will avoid the death packet going back and forth between MIM and the floor.

- Talk with the physician to see if an autopsy is advised and talk with the family to explain the variations available when performing an autopsy.

- Ensure the family their loved one will be taken care of, in the morgue, in a respectful and dignified manner.

- Work with Chaplain Services to ensure the family receives the necessary bereavement support.

- Work with the family and the Carolina Donor Services (CDS) Call Center to get the donation process straightened out during the time on the floor; this will expedite the deceased process.

- Work with the Transport department to escort the body to the morgue and log-in the decedent so the nursing staff can stay on the floor and resume their normal activities.
• Take the death packet and process the death packet so the HUCs can stay on the floor and resume their normal activities.

• Work with Orange County Vital Records department to clarify any Death Certificate issues.

We offer a **cremation service** to Moms who have just lost a fetus or newborn so we coordinated the cremation process between the funeral home (Quality Mortuary) and family and we follow-up on any cremains that have not been received by the family.

We coordinate ‘**body part’ burial** between the doctor, family and funeral homes. This usually refers to amputations (i.e. where the Jewish religion, believes their whole body be together at time of death).

We coordinate the ‘**viewing of bodies**’ between the floor nursing staff and family members. This is where we meet with a member of chaplain services, nursing staff, family and sometimes patient relations. In a situation like this we definitely need more staff involved with the family while we prepare the body for viewing. Currently, we do not have a designated area for the viewing so we have to coordinate this effort with Lula Daniel.

We are involved in the ‘**autopsy’** process as far as mailing the **reports** to families, **explaining the process** to family members, **verifying** who is the **next-of-kin**, coordinating a **medical examiner case vs a hospital** case and instruct the family to contact the ME’s office directly for their copy of an autopsy report (they have to ask for a report vs UNC mailing a report automatically). Dr. Thorne is very active in ensuring the residents and attendings’ meet the **CAP guidelines**, with regards to finalizing a report within the 60-working-day requirement. In rare, complicated cases it may go over this deadline. We encourage the next-of-kin to call us at any time with questions or just to follow-up on the progress of the report. We do not provide a preliminary report to the family as this just causes confusion and may result in legal complications.