



HOSPITAL AUTOPSY CONSENT FORM

Location: _____

Requesting Physician: _____

Patient's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ PHN: _____

Date/Time of Death: _____

Please read the reverse before completing the form

- I, (Full Name) _____ bearing the relationship of (in descending order of legal consent)
- spouse > adult son / daughter > parent > adult sibling > grandparent > grandchild > uncle or aunt >
 - nephew or niece > legal guardian or executor of the estate > responsible person (with witness) to the deceased
 - have read the Hospital Autopsy Information Information for the Family (**back of this page**) Yes No
 - grant permission to perform an autopsy Yes No

I understand it will be necessary for small pieces of tissue (diagnostic samples) to be retained permanently for laboratory testing. This is essential for a complete, informative autopsy.

By signing, I declare that to my knowledge no individual of higher order of legal consent would object to the performance of an autopsy.

Autopsy restrictions (choose only one option)

- None
- Limit the Autopsy to (*can be more than one site*) head only chest only abdomen only other _____

Organs being taken and held (choose only one option)

- I do not object to any organs being taken for further investigation to fully understand the cause of death and the effects of treatment.
- I object to any organs being taken for further investigation.
- I object to the following organs being taken for further investigation: (*list organs*) _____

Retention and disposal of tissue or organs taken (choose only one option)

- The hospital may dispose of the tissue samples or organs in a lawful and respectful way.
- I will arrange for the tissue samples or organs to be disposed of in a lawful way at my expense.
- I prefer the tissue samples or organs to be reunited with the body before it is released, even though this may delay the funeral.
I prefer to have the organs back by (*time*) _____ (*date – dd/mm/yyyy*) _____

Medical research and education (choose only one option)

- I do not object to any fluid, tissue or organ being taken for medical research, education and / or quality purposes.
- I object to any fluid, tissue or organ being taken for medical research, education and / or quality purposes.
- I object to the following tissue, fluids or organs being taken for medical research, education and / or quality purposes:
(*list the tissue, fluids and organs*) _____

Attendance at autopsy (choose only one option)

- I do not object to other personnel (e.g. medical and nursing students) attending the autopsy for educational purposes.
- I object to other personnel (e.g. medical and nursing students) attending the autopsy for educational purposes.

Signature: _____

Witness signature: _____

Relationship to deceased: _____

Name & position: _____

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): _____

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): _____

Consent by TELEPHONE – the Requesting Health Care Personnel is required to:

- Explain the contents of the Hospital Autopsy Consent - Information for the Family sheet to the closest available next of kin and answer his / her questions.
- Complete all sections on this form, including documenting the options that the above next of kin has agreed to.
- Sign the document with a witness who independently asks and confirms the consent.

Signature of Requesting Health Care Personnel: _____

Witness signature: _____

Name & position: _____

Name and position: _____

Date (dd/mm/yyyy) and time: _____

Date (dd/mm/yyyy) and time: _____

HOSPITAL AUTOPSY – INFORMATION FOR THE FAMILY

What is a hospital autopsy? A physician who specializes in pathology (a pathologist), will perform an examination of the body and if necessary, include microscopic examination of tissue samples.

Why is it performed? A hospital autopsy can confirm or determine the cause of death, and identify the nature and extent of any other diseases present. It may also help you better understand the deceased's illness and cause of death. It may provide information that may be relevant to you and other relatives' health conditions.

Hospital Autopsy: General Information

- You are able to decide whether the deceased will have a **full** or a **limited** hospital autopsy. It is important that you understand and are comfortable with what you are asked to authorize.
- During a **full hospital autopsy**, a pathologist undertakes an external and internal examination of the body. To allow this to happen, the internal organs are removed from the chest, abdomen, and head and are examined.
- In a **limited hospital autopsy**, the examination is restricted to only particular regions or organs of the body that you agree to. However, a limited hospital autopsy may not provide all the information necessary to determine what caused or contributed to the death.
- Removing and keeping diagnostic samples is a usual part of most autopsies. These samples may be examined by the pathologist using a microscope.
- Most organs and tissues are returned to the body at the end of the hospital autopsy unless you give specific permission for an organ or organs to be retained for further examination. Certain medical conditions (such as diseases of the brain), may require retaining the entire organ. Allowing the pathologist discretion in this matter ensures maximum possible information in the final autopsy report.
- At the completion of the examination, these organs and any samples that remain after testing will be:
 - (a) disposed of respectfully by the hospital, or
 - (b) at your request, released to a funeral director for burial or cremation at a later date, (may incur additional funeral costs to the family), or
 - (c) at your request, all samples are returned to the body before the funeral, which may be delayed as a result, and may also incur additional funeral costs to the family.
- You can consent to diagnostic samples and/or extra tissue being removed for purposes of research, teaching and future laboratory use. Separate authorization will be sought for your consent for the use of samples or tissues in specific research projects.

What happens after the hospital autopsy? The organs are returned to the body and the body is closed with great care and respect so that it is always possible for a viewing after the hospital autopsy.

Will a hospital autopsy delay the funeral? The funeral will only be delayed if you decide that all of the diagnostic samples must be returned prior to the funeral.

How will the family know the outcome of the hospital autopsy? The detailed hospital autopsy report will be completed by the pathologist. The report is sent to the doctor who requested the hospital autopsy, and who can discuss the report with the family.

What about the death certificate? The attending doctor issues a Medical Certificate of Death, which allows the death to be registered with Vital Statistics Agency. Copies can be applied for through Vital Statistics or the Funeral Director can do this on your behalf.

Confidentiality: All information gained from a hospital autopsy is confidential. All medical and autopsy information is communicated only between treating doctors, pathologists and other health professionals. Confidentiality will be applied to any resulting medical publication to ensure the deceased's identity is not revealed.

If you feel the death requires investigation by a **Coroner**, you should contact the Regional Coroner's Office.

If you have further questions, you can ask the attending physician or the pathologist.