In-Hospital Fatality Surge Body Collection Point (BCP) Demobilization Guide

Situational Awareness

As New York City observes a downward trend in citywide fatalities and reduced census numbers at hospitals, OCME will be demobilizing the BCP Taskforce as of Thursday, May 21st. OCME and NYCEM will coordinate to retrieve BCPs from the hospitals in order to prepare and stage the units for potential future deployment.   Hospitals will resume reporting of cases in accordance with pre-COVID protocols.

What Does This Mean for the Hospitals?

Effective Friday, May 22, 2020 hospitals will be expected to return to near-normal operations with regards to reporting cases to OCME for claim, submitting case-related documents and preparing cases for OCME retrieval.

- Cases must be reported to OCME according to pre-COVID processes, including the submission of case-related documentation.
- OCME will resume normal protocols for the retrieval of cases utilizing agency Medical Examiner Transport Teams (METT).
- Hospitals are encouraged to assess inventories of critical resources to support fatality management (ruggedized body bags & bariatric bags, toe tags, etc.) and replenish stock, in advance of a possible second wave.
- OCME and NYCEM are strongly urging that hospitals release BCPs for demobilization. This will allow for the removal of shelving and sanitization of the units which will be staged for potential future deployment.
  - Hospital requests to maintain a BCP on-site will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Hospitals should continue to complete the daily morgue census survey. The survey will be updated to reflect the changes in operations and will provide stakeholders with visibility to anticipate a potential surge in fatalities requiring the deployment of assets.
- In anticipation of a future surge in fatalities, OCME and NYCEM will be prepared to deploy BCP trailers to requesting hospitals.

How Does a Hospital Report a CLAIM ONLY Case to OCME?

Hospitals should report cases to OCME in accordance with pre-COVID policies. Hospitals should report CLAIM ONLY cases to OCME when the case remains are unclaimed by a funeral home OR the hospital/funeral home requires storage of the decedent until a funeral home is able to appropriately pick-up the case for final disposition.

- Hospitals should hold unclaimed cases for 7 days prior to requesting case recovery from OCME.
- Submit case documents to OCME by fax number: 332-900-8581
  - Case Face Sheet
  - Case Clinical Summary Worksheet
    - Requires notification to the Public Administrator for any decedent without next of kin
  - Death Certificate (optional – OCME continues to receive death certificates automatically from DOHMH when completely registered)
  - City Burial cases will require:
    - Burial Permit
    - A letter from the NOK authorizing this disposition type. If NOK are not available, please select Claim Only.

OCME will continue to coordinate with hospitals to ensure all documents are complete and competent for removal of cases. If any of the above requirements are not met, the case cannot be accepted by OCME.

How Will OCME Retrieve Cases from the Hospital?

OCME will make recoveries utilizing the METT in accordance with normal, pre-COVID protocols.

Hospital must do the following to prepare the case for OCME pick-up:
- Case must be packaged in body bag and documented appropriately:
  - Hospital wristband, tag on exterior of the body bag indicating decedent name and medical record number
- Case must be removed from any temporary storage area or trailer
  - OCME personnel will not access any remaining on-site BCP units to retrieve the case.

How to Request a Body Collection Point?

OCME and NYCEM will continue to monitor citywide fatality impacts of the pandemic. Based on continued coordination, recommendations will be made regarding the deployment of staged assets. If a future need for a BCP arises, OCME and NYCEM will be prepared to rapidly deploy assets to hospitals Citywide.

To request a BCP healthcare facilities are instructed to complete the following, as directed by the Citywide Logistics Center:

- Healthcare facilities are requested to submit requests through the appropriate healthcare association (Health + Hospitals or Greater New York Hospital Association) who will contact HealthMedicalESFList@oem.nyc.gov

The requesting network/facility must provide the following information to NYCEM upon making the request:
- Facility Name
- Facility Address
- Point-of-Contact for Mortuary Operations or Fatality Management Operations (including name, position, phone number, and email)
- Location designated for the BCP

Please visit the OCME official website which includes a "Case Reporting Criteria for Clinicians" page and the clinical summary worksheet and instructions at www.nyc.gov/ocmereportacase.