



Virtual Pronouncement of Death – Process Map

Virtual pronouncement of expected deaths in the home¹ should be considered during COVID-19, and the decision should be made in collaboration with clinicians and individual families².

1

Discussions with the patient/patient's family to confirm the patient's wish to die at home

- MRP discusses with the patient/family the process for an expected death at home and confirms the patient's expressed wish is to die at home.
- MRP initiates local 'Expected Death in the Home' protocols/procedure.
- If appropriate, MRP will discuss the option of virtual pronouncement with the family and what this will involve determining if this an option for the patient/family.



2

Family agrees, and it is of the opinion of the MRP that virtual pronouncement is appropriate

- Family indicates they are comfortable with this approach and understands that a health care provider will not be present in the home at the time of death.
- Family indicates they have the technology to support virtual pronouncement and can refer to https://www.virusfacts.ca/virtual_appointments for more information on virtual care.
- MRP will connect with local funeral homes and nursing agencies to discuss details and implement a process, for ex. how will physical removal of equipment such as catheters, CADD pumps etc. be completed.
- Designate a primary contact (could be MRP, regional centralized contact etc.) that will be point of contact for virtual pronouncement and provide info to the family.



3

Death occurs in the home

- Family contacts designated primary contact. MRP is not the primary contact, MRP is notified and proceed to guide family through the process to confirm deceased virtually as previously discussed with the family.
- Death is reported and the funeral home is contacted by MRP.
- Probable or confirmed deaths due to COVID-19 are to be reported to local public health offices by MRP.
- Medical Certificate of Death is completed in timely manner.

¹ Important to recognize this is only intended for expected deaths in the home. This would not be utilized for unexpected deaths (Coroners would be involved)

² The CPSO's Telemedicine policy does not prohibit the provision of any specific type of care through virtual modalities. Rather, for each patient and in each contemplated use, physicians will need to use their judgment to determine whether its use is appropriate in the circumstances and whether they will be able to meet all their relevant legal and professional obligations and the standard of care. Whether the pronouncement of death can be done virtually will need to be decided giving consideration to the specifics of the circumstance. This could include the specific nature of the patient's expected trajectory of decline and the need to physically attend to the patient in order to check vital signs, including the need to ensure weak vital signs are not inadvertently missed. It will also be important to work closely with the Coroner and/or funeral homes to ensure there are no procedural requirements regarding pronouncement that need to be satisfied prior to transferring the patient from the place of death.