Dear Mortuary Managers:

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) is working closely with the Department of Public Health (DPH) to help manage mortuary issues associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The OCME has opened a mortuary services staging area to help with assuring that deathcare services throughout Massachusetts remain fully operational. What this means to your healthcare facility is that the OCME will work with you to help manage your mortuary capacity. We have previously asked you to provide us onsite point of contact(s) with email and phone number for your mortuary (preferably a mortuary manager); if you have not done so, please email this to lisa.riccobene@mass.gov as soon as possible.

**Purpose of mortuary services staging area:**
Assure that deathcare and mortuary services remain functional throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, including assisting with the temporary storage, management, and transportation as necessary.

**Mortuary services staging area opening date:**
Wednesday April 8, 2020

**Mortuary services staging area hours: dispatch / call center:** Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm

**Mortuary transportation services:** Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm.
These hours may fluctuate through this event and updated information will be provided.

**How to access the mortuary services staging area:** Please call mortuary services staging area dispatch at **#617-571-4837** to discuss mortuary issues you may be experiencing. Be prepared to report the following information:
1) Person reporting
2) Name of healthcare facility and specific campus.
3) Name of decedent
4) Institutional record number (ex. medical record number)
5) Date of Death
6) Date of Birth
7) Race
8) Sex
9) Next of kin information (name, address, telephone number, and relationship)
10) COVID-19 positivity

**Important points regarding the mortuary services staging area:**
1) The mortuary services staging area is a contingency plan and should not be the primary option for managing mortuary issues. Healthcare facilities should continue to follow their standard decedent affairs practices, including working closely with appropriate funeral directors to ensure proper deathcare services.
2) Mortuaries should call to discuss capacities and transport issues before they become unmanageable (i.e., call us sooner rather than later). We will offer help in management.
3) Death certificates must be completed prior to engaging the mortuary services staging area. The following is a link to the Massachusetts Electronic Death Registration System: https://www.mass.gov/service-details/vip-electronic-death-registration-system-edrs

4) The body of the decedents must be tagged with a legible first and last name, and preferably date of birth and institutional record number (for example medical record number).

5) The OCME will be taking custody of decedents that we transport out of your mortuary. Your healthcare facility will no longer need to be involved in the deathcare services of the decedent after the decedent is transported from your facility.

6) In order to minimize the handling of infectious material, clothing will not be removed or stored by the OCME; clothing may also be destroyed during examination.

7) Decedents should be appropriately prepared for release, in the form of an airtight/watertight container and preferably within a body bag.

8) Personal property should be removed from the decedent and not transported to the mortuary services staging area.

9) The mortuary services staging area is paperless. All paper materials (hospital charts, etc.) should not be sent with decedent and will be discarded.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is committed to working with you to get through this pandemic.

Mindy J. Hull, MD
Chief Medical Examiner
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
Commonwealth of Massachusetts