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Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
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NORTHERN VA. DISTRICT:
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September 18, 2019

Re: Cremation Authorization Requirements for Individuals Donated to Out-of-State Donor Programs
To Virginia Mortuary Services Partners:

Several questions have been posed to our office about the requirement for cremation authorizations when the bodies of individuals who die in Virginia are donated to out-of-state donor programs.

Virginia code (§ 32.1-309.3) requires authorization from the Medical Examiner for cremation of any dead body whose death occurred in Virginia. This authorization is required for any death which occurred in Virginia regardless of the location or time of the cremation.

Since the final disposition of bodies donated to out-of-state donor programs is usually cremation, Medical Examiner authorization is required for any decedent who died in Virginia.

In these situations, it is the responsibility of the Funeral Home acting on behalf of the Donation Program to contact the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to arrange for cremation authorization prior to releasing or transporting the donor out of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Please contact Rick Sikon, Director of Virginia State Anatomical Program, at Rick.Sikon@vdh.virginia.gov or you may call 804-786-3174 for additional information.

Sincerely,

William T. Gormley, M.D.
Chief Medical Examiner