

Date:	April 17, 2020
To:	NH Clinical Staff, NH Leadership and NH Medical Staff
From:	Dr. Ronald Chapman, VP Medicine Penny Anguish, Chief Operating Officer Dr. K. Azar, Medical Director, Lab Services Lisette Vienneau, Regional Director, Diagnostic
Cc:	NH Chief Operating Officers: Penny Anguish (NI), Ciro Panessa (NW), Angela De Smit (NE) Medical Directors: Dr. Shannon Douglas (NI Lakes/Omineca), Dr. Jaco Fourie (NW), Dr. Dietrich Furstenburg (NI Rural), Dr. Tony Preston (PG), Dr. Becky Temple (NE)
Re:	Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) – AUTOPSIES ON SUSPECTED AND CONFIRMED COVID-19 DECEDENTS

Purpose:

To provide direction on the performance of autopsies on suspected and confirmed positive COVID-19 cases.

Guidance:

Northern Health will be following the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) recommendations for the [Safe Handling of Bodies of Deceased Persons with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#).

Northern Health autopsy suites are not suitable to handle Hazard Group 3 pathogens, which includes COVID-19.

Directive:

An autopsy request on a suspected COVID-19 death should have samples taken to assess for COVID-19 infection before the decision of a post-mortem exam is made.

- Check to see if an ante-mortem sample has been collected and results are pending. Post-mortem sampling may not be necessary in that case

Northern Health will not offer autopsy services on confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 decedents.

The decision of being able to provide medical autopsy service at a given hospital during this public health emergency of the COVID-19 infection outbreak will be made by the pathologist based on the ability to provide the service with the consideration of an appropriate facility and personal protective equipment on a case by case basis.