



Department of Health

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Commissioner

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Executive Deputy Commissioner

Date: July 26, 2021

To: Medical Examiners, Coroner and/or Coroner Physicians

Guidance for post-mortem COVID-19

Dear Medical Examiners, Coroner and Coroner Physicians:

New York State Title 10 Codes, Rules and Regulations were put into effect mandating post-mortem testing on decedents suspected of having suffered the effects of COVID-19 within 48 hours of death, if no such test was performed in the 14 days prior to death.

For New York State to effectively verify COVID-19 related fatalities, testing must occur whenever a patient or decedent is suspected of having COVID-19. In the event of an unattended death where such testing was not already performed, it is vital for the coroner, coroner physician or medical examiner to not only perform the test, but to refrain from putting in a probable or presumed cause of death on a death certificate without corroboration. Whenever possible, the results of a COVID-19 test must be accounted for in death certificates to ensure that they are as accurate as possible.

The ability of the Department to collate accurate data measuring the true severity of COVID-19 depends on the integrity of this underlying diagnostic evidence. The future success of our containment and mitigation strategies against the COVID-19 pandemic are greatly assisted by an accurate reflection of COVID-19 causes of death, verified by medical expertise and testing.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (518) 474-5245.

Sincerely,

Diana A. Yang
New York State Registrar
Director, Bureau of Vital Records