



Office of Emergency Management (OEM)

Milwaukee County

Christine Westrich, Director OEM

M. Riccardo Colella, DO, MPH, FACEP, Director of Medical Services

Number: 16-04

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From: M. Riccardo Colella, DO, MPH, FACEP

Section: Medical Services

To: EMS Field Providers, Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office

Subject: Clarification of Pronouncement of Death Process

Purpose: Ensure a physician medical control number is properly reported during disposition of deceased patients

According to Wisconsin Statute, only physicians, coroners, medical examiners or deputy medical examiners may **pronounce** death. A nurse, physician's assistant, paramedic or emergency medical technician may not pronounce a person dead and may not be listed on the Notice of Removal Form as a pronouncer of death. While paramedics are not able to pronounce death, they are directed to terminate resuscitation either by standing protocol or through consultation with on-line medical control.

In the MCEMS system, when medical care is initiated as part of a resuscitation effort, termination of resuscitation is accomplished by standing order (Asystole protocol, medical control number 0010), on-line medical control or rarely an on-scene physician. A physician medical control number (or name if on scene) and time of death pronouncement must be used in the management of the deceased.

In circumstances where EMS encounters an obviously deceased person and no resuscitation effort is initiated, pronouncement of death is left to the discretion of the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office; no Milwaukee County EMS medical control physician is to be used in this circumstance.

An amendment to the Management of Deceased Patients Operational Policy will be forthcoming.