



HUDSON VALLEY REGIONAL EMERGENCY  
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## Hudson Valley REMAC Advisory

2019-08

Termination of Resuscitation

Issue Date: 8-20-2019

### **Purpose**

To educate EMS personnel, emergency department physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners and hospitals in the proper definitions of Determination of Obvious Death, Termination of Resuscitation and Pronouncement of Death when it involves the pre-hospital setting.

Although New York State Public Health Law does not require that death be pronounced by a physician it is the position of the Hudson Valley Regional Emergency Medical Services Council that all levels of Pre-Hospital Emergency Medical Service (EMS) providers do not pronounce any patient dead.

### **Definitions**

*Determination of Obvious Death* – When a patient is apneic and pulseless and meets any of the criteria as defined in the New York State Basic Life Support (BLS) Protocol – Obvious Death or New York State Advanced Life Support (ALS) Protocol – Obvious Death.

*Termination of Resuscitation* – Cessation of Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation in the pre-hospital setting either at the scene or once transportation has been initiated. The decision to terminate resuscitative efforts can be made in accordance with NYS Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) protocols.

*Pronouncement of Death* - the process of recognition and documentation of the physical signs of death. It is the basis of the decision not to engage in resuscitation efforts and a decision made after termination of resuscitative efforts. The time and location of death is the time the Medical Practitioner determines the patient to be deceased and at that particular location.

### **Policy**

1. New York State Emergency Medical Service providers (all levels) operating within the Hudson Valley Regional Emergency Medical Services Council will not make a Pronouncement of Death.



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### **Key Points / Considerations**

- All EMS providers should be familiar with and follow NYS BLS and ALS protocols pertaining to Cardiac Arrest, Obvious Death and Termination of Resuscitation.
- The Pronouncement of Death shall not be made by an EMS Provider.
- When it is determined that resuscitative efforts will not be initiated or terminated once initiated (either through standing orders or on-line medical control) it shall be referred to and documented as “Termination of Resuscitation”. Note the time that resuscitative efforts have been withheld. Note: the time that resuscitative efforts have been withheld and the time of death will / may not be the same.
- If a determination has been made to withhold resuscitative efforts and transportation has not been initiated;
  - Notify Law Enforcement.
  - Follow NYS BLS and ALS Protocols with regards to termination of resuscitation.
- Once transportation has been initiated (includes any point after which the patient has been moved from place the patient was found) and a decision has been made to withhold resuscitative efforts the patient is to be transported to the hospital emergency department.
- The patient is to be taken to the Emergency Department. The receiving hospital is responsible for the Pronouncement of Death.
- When a decision has been made to withhold resuscitative efforts (termination of resuscitative efforts) or honor a DNR / MOLST during inter-facility / discharge transports the following guidelines shall apply;
  - From a Nursing home to a hospital.
    - Follow NYS BLS and / or ALS Protocols.
  - From a Hospital to a nursing home, rehab facility or the patient’s home.
    - Return the patient to the initiating facility.
  - From one hospital to another hospital.
    - Return the patient to the initiating facility.