

## **Pronouncement of Death by Postgraduate Trainees**

### **Definition:**

Postgraduate trainee: Residents and Clinical Fellows.

### **Recommendations for Pronouncement of Death in Hamilton Hospitals**

1. All health workers recognize that prompt pronouncement of death is an important part of care for patients and families.
2. Pronouncement of death is a medical act and must be completed by a physician. It is the ultimate responsibility care for patients and families of the patient's attending physician or the attending physician on-call.
3. Postgraduate trainees, while working, and when on-call on a teaching service have responsibilities which include the pronouncement of death.
4. As physicians present in the hospital after hours, Postgraduate trainees on-call should consider it a professional courtesy to perform the act of pronouncement of death on non-teaching services. It would be required for the non-teaching service attending physician to directly make the request of the Postgraduate trainee on-call to perform the act of pronouncement of death. It remains the responsibility of the attending to fill out the medical certificate of death, notify the coroner and make requests regarding post-mortem and or organ donation. It is also the responsibility of the deceased patient's attending physician, or the attending physician on call, to communicate with the bereaved family. If there are contentious situations or difficulties, the attending physician should be primarily responsible for these communications.