

## **Note to Funeral Home Directors**

Dear Funeral Home Director:

From time-to-time, a family that has lost a loved one under unknown or questionable circumstances wishes to have a postmortem examination (**private autopsy**) performed on their deceased relative.

Over the past 30 years, I have had the opportunity to provide these professional services to bereaved families throughout our region, the U.S., and abroad. Many cases involving death benefits for the injured and other kinds of industrial claims and medical negligence have been resolved based upon my medical opinions, written reports and testimony, when required.

Sometimes, next-of-kin are anxious to learn about specific disease processes – for example, Alzheimer’s disease, multiple sclerosis, Huntington’s Chorea, etc. – because of genetic concerns for surviving and even future closely related family members. In light of rapidly advancing medical technologies and increasingly sophisticated preventive and therapeutic capabilities, postmortem findings can play a major beneficial role in the well-being and extended life span of other family members.

Repeat **private autopsies** are occasionally called for in a variety of legal situations, both civil and criminal. While postmortem findings of a physical, tangible nature should be objectively noted and described with uniformity, it is not at all infrequent that interpretations of those findings result in significantly different subjective opinions by two or more pathologists. Whether the legal controversy deals with a question of medical malpractice, a work injury, or an allegation or suspicion of homicide, a **second private autopsy** or review and opinion may prove to be quite important.

It should be noted that a deceased body can be transported by livery service, or sent by airline from one state to another for an autopsy to be performed. Such physical arrangements are much less cumbersome and expensive than is generally believed. Similarly, exhumation for purposes of an original or repeat postmortem examination should be seriously contemplated for many reasons, medical or legal. These arrangements are handled by families through the assistance of their funeral directors, usually without any problem, just as long as the request is made by the legally authorized next-of-kin.

I hereby write to apprise you and your colleagues of my availability to perform private autopsies for families, whatever their reason or objective may be with my medical and legal background, coupled with about 30-years of experience as an actively practicing anatomic, clinical and forensic pathologist, I believe I am able to provide an overall approach and broad understanding of any kind of medical and medical-legal inquiry. We sometimes travel out-of-state or abroad to perform **private autopsies** to accommodate the needs of families and our clients.

These private postmortem examinations are performed by me personally.

We are quite flexible in making arrangements for such cases, which we do seven days a week, morning, afternoon or evening. Special arrangements can be made for **private autopsies** to be done after funeral services have been completed if that proves necessary, although it is much preferable from a diagnostic standpoint to perform an autopsy on an unembalmed body.

Should you desire any additional information at this time, or should you have occasion to advise a family in the future regarding a **private autopsy**, please contact me

or my investigator(s) can be reached at (402) 486-3447 during regular workdays and through our answering service (at the same number) on weekends and evenings.

Please be assured of our willingness and desire to cooperate with you to the fullest extent possible in any case in which a family is seeking a private autopsy and your funeral home is involved. **Please download our Form “Authorization For Autopsy.”**

Thank you for your consideration of this information.

Sincerely yours,

Matthias I. Okoye, M.D., J.D.

Director

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