

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES
DDS DIRECTOR'S OFFICE POLICY MANUAL

Policy Type	Subject of Policy	Policy
	Autopsy, Donation of Body for	
Administrative	Medical Research, Burial, and Cremation	1014

1. **Purpose.** This document outlines the procedure to be followed by the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) regarding the performance of an autopsy (postmortem examination) on the body of an individual who expires while residing in a facility operated by DDS or while being served by a program licensed by DDS. This document explains parameters for the donation of a body for the purpose of medical research. This document states the DDS position on cremation.
2. **Scope.** This Policy is directed to all employees and licensees of the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services.

3. **Definition.**

Forensic autopsy: An autopsy is considered to be a forensic examination when it is requested by the coroner, sheriff, chief of police, or prosecuting attorney of the county where the death occurred or was discovered. A forensic autopsy is performed by the State Crime Laboratory [See Arkansas Code Annotated (ACA) §12-12-318].

4. **Autopsy.**

A. **Forensic autopsy.**

The on-site Administrator or community program director shall follow the instructions of one of the officials listed in Section 3, above.

B. **Reporting of suspicions as to cause of death.**

When any person, including but not limited to:

DHS director, DDS director, Disability Rights Center representative, director of a DDS licensed program, superintendent of a Human Development Center, or a deceased individual's attending physician, parent(s), guardian, or next of kin

(a) has a concern regarding the cause of death of a person receiving services from any DDS program or facility, and

(b) believes an autopsy is warranted,

this concern should be reported immediately to an official listed in Section 3, above, as well to the DDS Director.

5. **Donation by a client of own body for medical research.**

If a client has chosen to donate his or her body for medical research, the person in charge of the body upon death shall notify the Department of Anatomy, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), that the body is available

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for use in medical research (reference A.C.A §20-17-705). The Department of Anatomy normally will accept all bodies that meet certain criteria. A list of these criteria may be obtained by contacting UAMS.		

6. Burial

A. Persons authorized to claim a body for burial

If a client has chosen to be buried, any of these persons may claim a body for burial: a relative, the next of kin, a friend, any representative of a fraternal society of which the deceased was a member, or a representative of any charitable or religious group.

B. Body unclaimed for burial

If a body has not been claimed for burial by one of the persons named in 5.B. after 48 hours, the person in charge of the body shall notify the Department of Anatomy, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), that the body is available for use in medical research (reference A.C.A §20-17-703). The Department of Anatomy normally will accept all bodies that meet certain criteria. A list of these criteria may be obtained by contacting UAMS.

7. Cremation.

A. Need for evidence.

The cause of a person's death may be questioned at a later date. Evidence must therefore be preserved should a forensic autopsy be ordered by one of the authorities noted in Section 3, above.

B. Position on cremation.

In order to safeguard evidence, DDS will not arrange for, fund, or encourage cremation. The on-site administrator or the community program director will notify DDS, the Disability Rights Center, and the Office of Long Term Care when an intention to cremate is voiced by the person claiming the client's body.

Replacement Notation: This Policy replaces DDS Policy #1014, dated July 17, 1980, October 16, 1980, January 8, 1987, March 15, 1993, and December 1, 1993.