

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Renée D. Coleman-Mitchell, MPH  
Commissioner



Ned Lamont  
Governor  
Susan Bysiewicz  
Lt. Governor

HEALTHCARE QUALITY AND SAFETY BRANCH  
BLAST FAX 2020-15A

TO: Hospitals, Nursing Homes and ALSAs

FROM: Commissioner Renée D. Coleman-Mitchell, MPH *RCM*

CC: Deputy Commissioner Heather Aaron, MPH, LNHA  
Barbara Cass, RN., Branch Chief, Healthcare Quality and Safety Branch  
Donna Ortelle, Section Chief, Facility Licensing and Investigations Section

DATE: March 30, 2020

SUBJECT: Information from the Chief Medical Examiner regarding COVID-19

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How to Certify Confirmed and Suspected COVID-19 Deaths

As the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) has statutory jurisdiction over all deaths related to a disease which might constitute a threat to public health, **all suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases should be reported to the OCME (860-679-3980)**. The vast majority of these decedents, however, will not be brought to or certified by the OCME. As these are natural deaths, death certification should be completed by the treating physician. The degree of certainty needed to certify a natural death is a medical probability (that is, more likely than not).

Deaths primarily due to COVID-19 with a confirmed test, should be certified as:

**Complications of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) respiratory infection**

**Part 2** may be used for contributing conditions such as: Pulmonary Emphysema, Asthma, Obesity, etc.



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Deaths suspected to be due to COVID-19 with testing pending, should be certified as:

**Complications of respiratory infection (suspect COVID-19)**

**Part 2** may be used for contributing conditions such as: Pulmonary Emphysema, Asthma, Obesity, etc.

Deaths primarily related to cardiac, liver, kidney, pulmonary disease, etc., in which a recent respiratory infection may have been enough of a stressor to contribute to death, may be certified with the primary disease in Part 1 and the respiratory infection in Part 2.

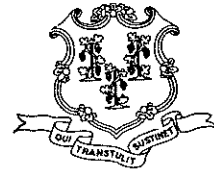
For example:

**Congestive heart failure due to atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease**

**Part 2: Recent novel coronavirus (COVID-19) respiratory infection**

*For patients who die in the ED with a history of a current respiratory infection but no prior COVID-19 testing, postmortem swabs should be obtained in the ED for testing.*

STATE  
OF CONNECTICUT  
**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER**  
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3/18/2020

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