



GEORGIA BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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OPERATIONS BULLETIN

2020-02

MEDICAL EXAMINER OFFICE GEORGIA BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

D. Victor Reynolds
Director

SUBJECT: Medical Examiner Operations during COVID-19

ATTENTION: Coroners, Death Investigation Specialists, Medical Examiners, and Law Enforcement

DATE: 04/02/2020

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404-270-8186

This operations bulletin is a follow-up to ME operations bulletin 2020-01 and to address questions that have been raised concerning decedents that are not accepted for examination by the GBI MEO but that local officials would like COVID-19 testing to be performed. Two current options exist:

1. The healthcare provider obtains a specimen for testing
 - Work with your local hospital/healthcare provider to obtain a nasopharyngeal (NP) swab
 - The healthcare provider will request testing through this mechanism:
<https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-19-online-testing-request>.
 - The healthcare provider will submit the specimen directly to the Georgia Public Health Laboratory (GPHL)

2. Obtain the specimen yourself
 - Request materials (plastic cotton tip swabs with viral media) from your district public health office (ask for an epidemiologist)
 - Request testing at GPHL through this mechanism: <https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-19-online-testing-request>
 - When filling out this request, be sure to indicate that the patient has died with date of death in the variables provided, and that the submitting facility is a Coroner's Office. These pieces will trigger approval for testing at GPHL with reviewers. Additional information about past medical history are particularly important to complete as well
 - Once your testing is approved, you will receive an encrypted email with laboratory forms to submit with the samples, and shipping instructions
 - Perform the NP swab collection, and then send the swabs and required documentation to GPHL

There is no current literature on the length of time the virus remains in the nasal passages after death but it is preferable to swab within 72 hours of death, possibly up to 1 week.

In addition, due to the infectious nature of the disease and for the safety of the Medical Examiner Staff and your staff, no individuals will be allowed to attend postmortem examinations at this time. Please know this is for everyone's safety. If you have any questions concerning an individual's examination, please call 404-270-8210 and you will be directed to an ME employee who can help.

I appreciate everyone's understanding in this unprecedented situation.

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