



Denver Health and Hospital Authority Intergovernmental Agreement Executive Summary

The Denver Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE), Office of the Medical Examiner (OME) is seeking an intergovernmental agreement with Denver Health and Hospital Authority (DHHA) to conduct postmortem skeletal surveys on deaths of children aged three years or younger. (The age bracket is the national standard established by the American Academy of Forensic Science.) Postmortem skeletal surveys assist in excluding skeletal trauma within a pediatric forensic autopsy as recommended by the American Academy of Forensic Science.

The Denver Office of the Medical Examiner does not have an on-staff radiologist to conduct postmortem skeletal surveys on children under the age of three. The Denver Office of the Medical Examiner is seeking the expertise of Denver Health and Hospital Authority's on-staff radiologist(s) to conduct postmortem skeletal surveys on patients (age three or younger) where the death has occurred under suspicious circumstances and may have resulted from child abuse. This service is for deaths that occur at Denver Health and Hospital Authority or at a residence within the limits of the City and County of Denver. Further defined, if the injury that resulted in the death occurred within the City and County of Denver, it falls under the Denver Office of the Medical Examiner's jurisdiction. If the death occurs in a Denver residence or if the patient is transported to a hospital with failed medical intervention efforts and the patient is age three or younger, the Denver Medical Examiner's Office will require this service from Denver Health and Hospital Authority. (The Denver Medical Examiner's Office legal jurisdiction is established by the C.R.S. §30-10-606.)

Whether or not a postmortem skeletal survey is needed is determined by the Denver Medical Examiner's forensic pathologist and will depend upon the information that is brought forth through the preliminary medicolegal death investigation. (Note most of these deaths are from Children's Hospital and they provide this service at no cost.) Having this Agreement in place with Denver Health and Hospital Authority will assist and allow the Denver Office of the Medical Examiner to determine the cause of death and provide confirmation of a death resulting from child abuse. The postmortem skeletal surveys will be performed by Denver Health and Hospital Authority and in accordance with their protocols and appropriate standards of practice.

Denver Health and Hospital Authority will prepare documentation of the postmortem skeletal survey and provide copies to the Denver Office of the Medical Examiner in a timely manner. The Denver Office of the Medical Examiner will pay Denver Health and Hospital Authority \$600.00 per postmortem skeletal survey performed.

Denver Department of Public Health & Environment
101 W Colfax Ave, Suite 800 | Denver, CO 80202
www.denvergov.org/PublicHealthandEnvironment
p. 720-913-1311 | f. 720-865-5531 | @DDPHE