Thank you for your interest in providing a brain tissue donation to the VCU Parkinson's & Movement Disorders Center Brain Tissue Resource Facility (BTRF). Please retain this sheet in case any information contained in it is needed at the time of donation. The following outline will explain some of the steps in the donation process and areas in which the family can help ensure a successful donation process.

**PRIOR TO AUTOPSY**

1. Patient Registration: Please complete the autopsy consent form and the Patient Information page. Completion of these forms will enroll the patient into our system. Please feel free to add any additional information about the patient's life experiences as they will be helpful. All forms can be found on the brain bank site (https://rampages.us/brainbank/).

2. Contact a funeral home and coordinate with them for your final plans. Taking care of your final arrangements is always much easier when you have time to consider your options. Please let the BTRF know as soon as possible which funeral home that has been chosen. BTRF staff will be available to review their procedures with them and answer any questions. In addition, please work with the funeral director to complete as much of the death certificate as you can—everything except time and date of death. Obtaining a signed death certificate is critical for donation and anything you can do ahead of time will help streamline to donation process. Also, please provide the funeral director with the Information for Funeral Directors. Providing this information to him will reduce the stress on the family during the donation process.

3. If the patient moves to a nursing home and/or has hospice care, discuss plans for a brain only autopsy with the relevant staff. The BTRF has written instructions for nursing care that can be given nursing home/hospice staff. It is essential to have everyone on the same page with regard to the donation process.

**BRAIN AUTOPSY PROCEDURES**

1. Call the selected funeral home and tell them that the patient has passed away and will need to be transported to VCUHS for an autopsy. If you have left the funeral directors information with hospice or nursing care, they may make the call for you.

2. The funeral home, family member or friend should notify the BTRF Director at 804-828-9664 that the donor has passed away. At this point, the funeral director will print out a completed death certificate and obtain a physician’s signature. Please have the funeral director fax this form to the BTRF at (804) 828-2010.
3. The Autopsy Coordinator will be available for the selected funeral home to coordinate transportation of the donor’s body to Virginia Commonwealth University Hospital. At this point, the family is not involved in the process. The BTRF and your funeral director will coordinate the donation process and return of the donor to the funeral home.

4. VCUH may call the next of kin to confirm the “Authorization for Post Mortem Examination.” Please also note, VCUH will NOT be providing a death certificate, so they will need to verify that the donor had a family physician who signed the certificate.

5. A VCUH Pathologist will perform the brain autopsy and tissue removal as soon as possible. Autopsies are performed Monday through Friday, between 8am and 4:00pm. (Note, the latest an autopsy will be completed on a Friday Afternoon is 2:30 pm). Unfortunately, we cannot accept donations between Friday Afternoon and Sunday Evening.

6. After the autopsy, the funeral home will transport the body to their facility for the arrangements selected by the family. The brain autopsy does not affect the appearance of the body in any way that would prevent an open-casket service. You will receive the Neuropathology report within three months.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the BTRF staff who will be happy to answer them. We have a very narrow window for brain donation, so it is essential to handle as many details as possible prior to the time of donation.

Please contact the BTRF Director at (804) 828-9664 or brain.bank@vcuhealth.org with any questions.

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