23.13 Deceased Human Bodies and Anatomical Specimens

PURPOSE

Establish guidelines and define accountability for oversight of appropriate management of deceased human bodies (cadavers) and human anatomical specimens at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHSC-H).

POLICY STATEMENT

a. UTHSC-H recognizes that biomedical education and research requires use of deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens.

b. UTHSC-H is committed to respectful, dignified treatment of human remains.

c. UTHSC-H requires that all its employees obey all legal and public health standards pertaining to the use of deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens, including but not limited to (Texas Health and Safety Code Chapters 691 and 692 and Texas Administrative Code Title 25, Part 4, Chapters 477 and 479) as well as the requirements included in the UTHSC-H Standards of Conduct (HOOP 2.01) and the statutory Code of Conduct for Texas Employees (Texas Government Code Chapter 572).

SCOPE

The policy applies to all use or possession of deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens that are obtained by UTHSC-H including but not limited to:

a. All use/possession by the Human Structure Facility/Willed Body Program administered by the Department of Neurobiology and Anatomy in the Medical School and under the rules and regulations of the Anatomical Board of the State of Texas (SAB) (Title 25 T.A.C. Part 4);

b. Any other UTHSC-H programs, organizational units and any UTHSC-H activities involving use or possession of deceased human bodies or anatomical specimens in the UTHSC-H Medical School and other Schools and entities whether or not they are under the jurisdiction of the SAB.
1. Anatomical specimens are human body parts, including bones and viscera, whether obtained from deceased human bodies or surgical specimens; small quantities of tissue or sections of bone or viscera are not considered to be anatomical specimens.  
2. A mechanism for consideration of exceptions or clarifications is provided in E.a.2. Teeth obtained from oral surgical procedures are considered in a separate category as defined in E.b.3.

IMPLEMENTATION

a. The President appoints an Institutional Anatomical Oversight Review Committee (IAORC) to provide oversight for management of deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens.

b. The Committee is to be chaired by the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (EVPAA) who is to be the Designated Responsible Party (DRP) for the Institution.

c. The EVPAA may, in turn, assign management responsibility for the various activities involving deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens to various individuals, including the Chairs of individual departments. In particular, the Chair of the Department of Neurobiology and Anatomy is responsible for the activities of the Willed Body Program and Human Structure Facility.

d. Day-to-day monitoring of activities and programs may be delegated by the Chair of the respective department.

e. On behalf of the IAORC, the Faculty Director of the Human Structure Facility and the Director of the Willed Body Program are to coordinate the receipt of reports from the various programs that involve any use of deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens at UTHSC-H.

f. All efforts will be made to include related responsibilities in job descriptions of all individuals with delegated responsibilities. Alternately notice of delegated responsibilities may be described in a formal letter of appointment.

g. The IAORC will meet at least annually to receive and review progress reports, exception reports and requests (sections E.a., E.b.1. and E.d.3.) and available program statistics from the various entities involved with deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens.

h. The IAORC is to monitor the activities of all UTHSC-H programs that involve any use of deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens. Failure of a program to comply with the policies and procedures of the IAORC may result in disapproval of further use of deceased human bodies or anatomical specimens, and may be subject to further
administrative review and disciplinary action.

i. The IAORC is to provide an educational and training program regarding applicable policies and procedures for the use of deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens.

PROCEDURES

a. Institutional Approval

1. All deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens entering, in possession of, utilized, and leaving UTHSC-H must do so as part of an activity, program or protocol that is registered with the IAORC.
2. The IAORC shall review and have approval authority over all proposed exceptions and clarifications involving the use and possession of any deceased human body or anatomical specimen.
3. Deceased human bodies or anatomical specimens obtained by UTHSC-H shall be retained by UTHSC-H unless an exception is approved pursuant to section E.a.2. above. The IAORC must review and approve, subject to applicable law, any transfers of deceased human bodies or anatomical specimens to any person, agency, corporation, organization, institution or other entity.
4. Any deceased human bodies or anatomical specimens under the supervision of the SAB must comply with policies and procedures of the SAB in order to be transferred to any other institution. (25 T.A.C. Part 4, §477.5)

b. Entry and Disposition

1. All deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens (except teeth obtained from oral surgical procedures, see below) entering or leaving UTHSC-H must do so through the Human Structure Facility of the Department of Neurobiology and Anatomy in the Medical School. Any exception requires preapproval by the IAORC.
2. Records of deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens obtained by those programs at UTHSC-H that have been pre-approved to acquire deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens must be filed with the Human Structure Facility.
3. All teeth acquired from dental procedures are to be received, recorded and dispensed through the Surgical Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Laboratory and other appropriate venues of the UTHSC-H Dental Branch.

c. Transport

1. All deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens approved for transfer from UTHSC-H must leave the premises through the Human Structure Facility by
transportation methods pursuant to (Texas Health & Safety Code §691.031) and consistent with all applicable SAB regulations including (25 T.A.C. 477.4 and 477.5).

2. The Procedure Manual of the Human Structure Facility is intended to include all details.

d. Record Keeping

1. A detailed system for monitoring the location of deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens consistent with applicable law and SAB rules and regulations is to be maintained by the Human Structure Facility.
2. Other Departments and Schools are to maintain a tracking system and file logs with the Human Structure Facility.
3. All exceptions, including any change in location or protocol for the activity using deceased human bodies or anatomical specimens, must be registered with the Human Structure Facility.

e. Disposition of Deceased Human Bodies and Anatomical Specimens

1. The standard practice for ultimate disposition of deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens is to carry out cremations at UTHSC-H according to policies and procedures of the Human Structure Facility/Willed Body Program.

f. Employees with Duties in the Human Structure Facility

1. The UTHSC-H standard is for all employees of the Human Structure Facility to have a valid Texas funeral director and embalmer’s license. Exception may be made if there are temporary manpower needs that cannot otherwise be met.

g. Procedure Manuals for Use of Deceased Human Bodies and Anatomical Specimens

1. Procedure Manuals for the Willed Body Program and the Human Structure Facility are available in the Administrative Office of the Department of Neurobiology and Anatomy.
2. The Procedure Manuals shall detail all mandatory policies and procedures, and all guidelines, for the operations of the Willed Body Program and the Human Structure Facility and the corresponding accountabilities of everyone with assignments in the Program. Development and maintenance of the Procedure Manuals are the responsibilities of the Director of the Willed Body Program and the Faculty Director of the Human Structure Facility, with review and approval of the Chair of Neurobiology and Anatomy.
3. Every UTHSC-H unit or program is to maintain policies and procedures for the handling of deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens that are in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Willed Body Program/Human
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Structure Facility. Such Procedure Manuals should be on file in the administrative offices of the various programs.

h. Financial Aspects

1. All transactions involving deceased human bodies and anatomical specimens shall occur in accordance with established UTHSC-H policies, procedures and all other applicable channels. Any purchase that is determined to be inconsistent with such policies, procedures and all other applicable channels risks disapproval of financial reimbursement, disapproval of further use of deceased human bodies or anatomical specimens, and will be subject to other administrative review, civil and criminal penalties as appropriate.

2. No person may receive remuneration from the sale of deceased human bodies or anatomical specimens.

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