

SOUTH CAROLINA CORONERS ASSOCIATION



SCCA POSITION STATEMENT

South Carolina Coroners shall cooperate with OPOs to conduct timely medicolegal investigations upon notice of, and prior to, a Donation after Cardiac Death (DCD).

Upon notice by an Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) of a potential Donation after Cardiac Death (DCD), Coroners shall investigate circumstances leading to the DCD to determine coroner jurisdiction as well as cause and manner of death. Coroners shall request and review medical records, law enforcement records and other pertinent records prior to donation to ensure an efficient and timely medicolegal investigation and to assist with the rapid procurement of organs after cardiac arrest.

Per national standards, OSAC guidelines and best practice, Coroners have authority to investigate circumstances leading to the DCD and shall cooperate with the OPO.

According to the Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC), Standard # OSAC 2023-N-0004:

4.1 Medical Examiner, Coroner and all other Medicolegal Death investigation agencies (MEC/MDI) shall cooperate and communicate with organ, eye, and tissue procurement and processing agencies to facilitate availability of donated organs and tissues. Likewise, organ, eye, and tissue procurement and processing agencies shall work to preserve MEC/MDI evidence to aid in determining cause and manner of death.

4.15 In cases of declaration of death by circulatory criteria (Donation after Cardiac Death) under MEC/MDI jurisdiction, arrangements are made for rapid procurement of organs after cardiac arrest. The MEC/MDI or their representative shall be notified by the organ procurement organization as early as possible and prior to or upon next of kin consent for donation, so that efficient and timely medicolegal investigation can take place. **An effort shall be made to allow the MEC/MDI investigation to occur prior to death pronouncement.**

It is the opinion of the SCCA BOD that Coroners should facilitate the above processes by conducting a limited investigation prior to death pronouncement.

Respectfully submitted and approved on February 13, 2024

SCCA Board of Directors