

'Summer Breeze' Project (Handling of Fetal Remains/Products of Conception)

Executive Sponsor: Brock Wright

Project Sponsor: Helga Bryant

Program/Dept: Health Sciences Centre

Process Improvement Specialist: Cameron Robertson

Start Date: June 2007

Finish Date: TBD

Over the last several years, there have been multiple incidents where mishandling of pathology specimens (including corpses, stillbirths, placentas, limbs/organs and products of conception) has resulted in serious incidents that have contributed to family/patient grief, costs, damage to HSC reputation. Examples of incidents include:

- Missed fetal remains for mass cremation ceremony
- Mislabeled specimens
- Separated fetuses/placentas
- Release/transport of incorrect specimens to family/funeral homes

Contributing factors thought to include compliance with labelling/handling processes, process variation, multiple hand-offs, poor documentation, physical space limitations, decentralized accountability, and increased options for patients.