**RETURN OR DISPOSAL OF KOIWI TANGATA/BODY PARTS AND TISSUE POLICY**

**Policy Applies to:** All Mercy Hospital staff and credentialed specialists who handle koiwi tangata/body parts and tissue and/or receive a request from a patient for the return of koiwi tangata/body parts and tissue. This policy does not refer to the return of metal ware or implants.

**Related Standards:**
- Health and Disability Services (Infection Prevention and Control) Standards NZS 8134.3:2008
- Code of Health and Disability Services Patient’s Rights 1996
- EQuIP standards 1.3.1 – Health care and services are appropriate; 1.6.2 – Consumers are informed of their rights and responsibilities; 1.6.3 – The organisation makes provision for consumers from culturally diverse backgrounds.

**Rationale:**
Mercy Hospital supports the return of koiwi tangata/body parts and tissue wherever possible to those for whom it has personal or cultural significance.

Regardless of how minor the koiwi tangata/body parts and tissue is perceived to be by staff, the cultural/religious needs of the patient will guide best practice for the return of koiwi tangata/body parts and tissue. However, we have a public health responsibility as well as a responsibility to our patients. For this reason, tissue that is known to be infectious or cytotoxic e.g. infected tonsils or tissue treated by chemotherapy or radiotherapy cannot be returned.

Cultural support is available for patients and can be accessed through the Mercy Hospital nursing staff.

The following principles apply to the return or disposal of koiwi tangata/body parts and tissue:
- Every consumer has the right to make a decision about the return or disposal of any koiwi tangata/body parts removed or obtained in the course of a health care procedure – *Right 7.9 of the Code of Health and Disability Consumers’ Rights 1996*.

- No koiwi tangata/body part or bodily substance removed or obtained in the course of a health care procedure may be stored, preserved or used unless:
  a) With the informed consent of the consumer;
  b) For the purposes of research that has received the approval of an Ethics Committee – *Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers’ Rights; Right 7 (10) amended 11 June 2004*.
Definitions:

**Koiwi Tangata /Human Body Parts and Tissue:** Any koiwi tangata/tissue or body parts removed from the body. This encompasses gross specimens, processed tissue and tissue slices. It does not include blood, body fluids screws or metal ware.

**Informed Consent:** A reasoned decision made by a patient based on sufficient information being provided, in such a way the patient can understand the rationale and consequences of their decision. The credentialed specialist is responsible for ensuring the patient receives appropriate information.

**Histology:** Examination of koiwi tangata/tissue or body fluids under a microscope. Specimens collected from koiwi tangata/tissue or body fluid at Mercy Hospital will be sent to Southern Community Laboratories.

**Objectives:**
- To ensure that koiwi tangata/body parts and tissue are handled, released or disposed of in a safe and culturally acceptable manner and in accordance with relevant legislation.
- To ensure patients (or whanau/parents/guardians for children) receive sufficient information to make an informed decision about the examination/testing of koiwi tangata/body parts and tissue and the disposal or return of koiwi tangata/body parts and tissue.

**Implementation:**
- Patient information booklet on process for the return of body parts is available in consultants’ rooms, reception, theatre and wards of the Mercy Hospital Campus and available on request from nursing staff.
- New staff is made aware of the process and how to access policy information as part of their orientation.
- Policy Updates advised at HOD meetings; HOD’s inform existing staff.

**Evaluation:**
- Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire/consumer feedback
- Complaints process
- Incident forms

**Associated Documents**

**External**
- The Code of Health & Disability Services Consumers Rights 2004, Right 7 and 7.9
- The Health & Disability Services Code 1994
- The Human Tissue Act 2008

**Internal**
- Waste Management Policy
- Cultural Policy
- Mercy Hospital Tikaka Best Practice Guidelines
Process

Care of Koiwi Tangata/Body Parts and Tissue, Not Requested by Patient, Whanau/Family:
- Koiwi tangata/body parts and tissue (that is smaller in size than a bone joint) must be disposed of in hazardous waste biohazard yellow bag.
- Koiwi tangata/Body parts larger than a bone joint must be sent to the Dunedin Hospital mortuary; they will arrange for cremation via a funeral director. The Koiwi tangata/body part must be double bagged, and wrapped to ensure the item is not visible and transported in a sealed box. Transfer form (Appendix 2) must be completed – tick box for cremation - and a copy of the form sent with the item.
- Transport of the item to the Dunedin Hospital mortuary should be arranged through Dunedin Taxis, Ph 477 7777. Koiwi tangata/Body parts must only be delivered during office hours.

Return of Koiwi Tangata/Body Parts and Tissue Requested by Patient or Whanau/Family:
- Where koiwi tangata/body parts are requested by the patient or whanau/family, Mercy Hospital shall determine if the part represents a risk to the public or the environment prior to its release.
- In cases where the organisation is concerned that release of the koiwi tangata/body part represents an unacceptable risk and there is dispute with those wishing to take possession of koiwi tangata/body parts, the Director of Clinical Services or delegate should seek guidance from the Medical Officer of Health (Public Health South, Ph 474 1700).
- If the koiwi tangata/body part is able to be released, it must be double bagged in plastic bags and then placed in a paper bag to ensure the contents are not visible. The plastic bag and paper bag should both have patient identification labels. Alternatively an opaque leak proof container can be used. Should the body part need to be stored in fluid, normal saline must be used.

Nursing Staff Responsibilities Following a Patient’s Request for the Return of Koiwi Tangata/Body Parts and Tissue:
- Admission nurse will ascertain whether it is important to the patient to keep the tissue for cultural reasons or whether they are just curious to see what the body part/tissue looks like. If the latter, the admission nurse will explain the risks associated with the disposal of infected tissue in the community and will offer to provide a photo. This will be documented on the pre-op checklist.
- Nurse to ensure patient receives an information booklet (Appendix 4).
- Document request on
  a) Clinical pathway, and
  b) Pre-op check list
- Have patient complete part one of request form (Appendix 3); place this in the front of the clinical record.
- Notify theatre staff / surgeon as per actions on clinical pathway.
- Prior to transferring the patient from the admission area to Operating Theatre Suite, theatre staff view pre-op checklist to confirm whether the patient would like the body part/tissue returned.
At time of surgery, theatre nurse collects the koiwi tangata/body part and tissue and place in an appropriate container. The container is to be clearly labelled with content, patient’s identification details and marked for “return to patient”

The koiwi tangata/body part and tissue is returned to the ward with the patient unless surgeon wishes it to be sent for histology first.

Patient or whanau/family member nominated by the patient shall sign part two of the request form (Appendix 3) to acknowledge receipt of the koiwi tangata/body part and tissue. This form is retained in the patient’s clinical record.

If the patient remains in hospital and the koiwi tangata/body part and tissue cannot be collected immediately by whanau/family or a person nominated by the patient, it will be sent to the Dunedin Hospital mortuary for storage. The transfer form (Appendix 2) is to be completed - tick box for storage - copy of the form sent with the item. The koiwi tangata/body part and tissue should be clearly labelled with the patient details including NHI and marked “return to patient”.

Storage of koiwi tangata/body parts and tissue at Dunedin Hospital Mortuary is for a maximum of 6 weeks.

Patient or whanau/family must be told to contact mortuary staff at Dunedin Hospital (phone 03 470 93141) with regard to collecting the koiwi tangata/body part and tissue. When collecting the koiwi tangata/body part and tissue, the patient or whanau/family will be asked for identification and are required to sign a form acknowledging receipt of the koiwi tangata/body part and tissue.

Koiwi Tangata/Body Part and Tissue sent for Histology:

- Theatre nurse informs the laboratory of the patient’s request to have koiwi tangata/body part and tissue returned and clearly documents this on the laboratory form.
- Laboratory staff will be responsible for notifying patient in writing when the koiwi tangata/body part and tissue is ready for collection.

Acknowledgements
- Canterbury DHB
- Southern DHB
- Waikato DHB

Appendices
- Appendix 1 – Human Tissue flow chart
- Appendix 2 - Transfer of Body part to Mortuary
- Appendix 3 – Return of Body Part – Human Tissue to Patient
- Appendix 4 – Clinical Tissue pt info Booklet
- Consent policy
- Cultural policy