

WHO MAY REQUEST ETHICS CONSULTATION?

Anyone directly involved in a situation that raises ethical questions may request an ethics consultation

- Any member of Health Care Team
- Patients or Persons receiving care
- Patient Supports

Any staff member may request educational help on ethical issues.

OTHER ETHICS RESOURCES

The Bioethicist works with the Ethics Committees in each of the organizations of the Cambridge Memorial Hospital.

In addition to ethics case consultation, the Ethics Consultation Service helps enhance patient care by providing assistance in three other areas:

- 1) Ethics education
- 2) Policy development and review
- 3) Research and review of research

To speak to Cambridge Memorial Hospital's Bioethicist, please call switchboard.

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*This guide provides general information about the current law in this subject area. However, legal information is not the same as legal advice, where legal advice is the application of law to an individual's specific circumstances. Although we have tried to make sure that the information in this guide is accurate and useful, we recommend that you consult a lawyer if you want professional legal advice in this subject area that is appropriate to your particular situation.



Ethics Consultation Service

*What supports are available when making difficult healthcare decisions?**



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Important choices are best made through open discussion among all those involved: patients, family, supports, physicians, nurses and other members of the health care team. Often, such discussion will be sufficient to reach resolution.

WHAT IS THE ETHICS CONSULTATION SERVICE?

For help with decision making, Cambridge Memorial Hospital offers the services of a Bioethicist.

The Bioethicist is available to provide help through ethics case consultation to those directly involved in situations that pose ethical dilemmas.

ETHICS CASE CONSULTATION

In an ethics case consultation the role of the Bioethicist is to help patients, their families and health professionals identify, clarify and work through ethical concerns that may arise in complex clinical situations.

The Bioethicist promotes communication among those involved, and often brings to the discussion knowledge of current thinking on the issues, to provide perspective.

Ethics consultation is an advisory service. This means that the Bioethicist will help guide the discussion and will offer advice and assistance to facilitate the process of decision making; but, the Bioethicist does not make the decisions. Patients, supports, family members and

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT ETHICAL DECISIONS

Clinical decisions in health care often have some ethical aspects to them because they involve choices about “What should be done?” which is the basic question of ethics.

Patients and other persons receiving care, families and health care professionals sometimes face difficult decisions about treatments that involve moral principles, religious beliefs or professional guidelines.

Healthcare ethics tries to enable others to engage in a thoughtful exploration of how to act well and make morally good choices based on beliefs and values about life, health, suffering and death.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON ETHICAL QUESTIONS?

Generally, ethical questions arise when the right thing to do is not clear, or when people disagree about what is best for a person who is ill. Some examples of questions are:

When should life support such as a ventilator be withdrawn?

What should family members do when there is a disagreement about a patient’s care or treatment plan?

Should a patient “at risk” be allowed to go home?

WHAT KIND OF EDUCATION IS OFFERED?

Professionals can develop their skills in attending to ethical issues through a number of formats:

- Educational rounds
- In-services
- Group discussions
- Individual discussions
- Scheduled seminars

Among other opportunities, there are Grand Ethics Rounds.