



HOW TO ACCESS THE ETHICS COMMITTEE

We can be reached during regular business hours by calling Social Work/Case Management at 603.663.2338.

After business hours, contact the Clinical Nurse Supervisor at 603.663.5300.

All requests will receive an immediate response.



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We respect and protect patients' rights, their diversity and values.



Elliot Health System offers the latest in technological advances with compassion and respect for our patients, their families and our staff. Technology advancements and treatments offer many benefits and challenges. Occasionally, a conflict may arise regarding the patient's hospitalization or treatment plan. At that point, a patient, family member or caregiver can access the Ethics Committee for assistance.

THE ETHICS COMMITTEE

We provide care with the patient's best interests in mind.

Ethics at the Elliot, our health system-wide Ethics Committee is available 24/7 to provide consultations in situations of ethical conflict and stress. The committee is a multidisciplinary advisory group comprised of physicians, nurses, social workers, administrators, clergy and representatives of the community.

The Ethics Committee is not a decision-making body. Decision-making authority rests with the patient, family and caregivers.

Our consultants clarify and assist in the resolution of ethical issues that can often be at the root of medical decision-making conflicts or confusion. The primary responsibility is to facilitate meetings among the caregivers and family, examine the patient and review the patient's medical chart. A summary of the consultation is recorded in the patient's chart.

Aside from offering ethical consultations, the committee assists the Elliot Health System in developing policies and practices that conform to the highest ethical standards, and offers ethical education to staff and the community.

WHAT IS AN ETHICAL DILEMMA?

Ethics is a system of moral principals or values. A dilemma occurs when a choice may need to be made that requires choosing between alternatives. Often times, conflicts arise based on differences in values, difficulties in communication, or due to the severe stress of critical illness. An ethics consultation can be helpful in these situations.

TYPICAL ETHICAL DILEMMAS

The types of ethical dilemmas typically experienced by patients, family and staff may include but are not limited to:

- End of life issues
- Pain control
- Confidentiality
- Informed consent
- Family caregiver participation in medical decision making
- Non-adherence to plan of care/refusal of prescription
- End of life decisions
- Beginning of life decisions
- Organ donation
- Medical futility

WHAT THE ETHICS COMMITTEE CAN DO TO HELP

- Mediate the discussion of differences of opinion among caregivers and/or family members about treatment
- Support a patient or family member in making decisions about what type of care the patient should receive or the goals of that care
- Facilitate ethical decision-making by physicians and the healthcare team
- Educate patients, families, and staff on hospital policies affecting patient care, such as resuscitation or life-saving treatments
- Work with patients, families, and staff to help include personal values, religious, and cultural traditions in decision making
- Address questions about a patient or proxy's ability to make decisions about treatment (proxies are appointed to make decisions for patients who cannot do so for themselves)
- Address concerns about possible limitations on care set by an insurer or third party payer

