

<b>Title: ETHICS CONSULTATION</b>	
<b>Policy Impact:</b> All Departments	<b>Document Type:</b> <b>POLICY</b>
<b>Policy Owner (editor/author):</b> Vice President	<b>Final Approver:</b> President and Chief Executive Officer

**BACKGROUND**

Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare (HDGH) has partnered with Hazel Markwell Ethics Corp.

Ethics Consultation Services assists staff, physicians, volunteers, students, patients and families on a wide range of ethical issues across the lifespan. Frequently encountered issues include value conflicts around decisions such as withholding or withdrawing treatment, consent and capacity, substitute decision-making, DNR orders, compliance with treatment plans, patient discharges, resource allocation.

**POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to identify when and how to arrange an ethics consult at HDGH. The goals are to enhance the ethical decision-making process, to mediate value conflicts, and ultimately to improve patient care.

A request for an ethics consult may be initiated by anyone (including patients or family members) who has an ethical concern about a particular situation. Ethics consults can also remain confidential and private, unless disclosure is required by law. Consults can be made regarding clinical, organizational and/or research ethics issues.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Clinical ethics** is a practical discipline that provides a structured approach to assist physicians (staff, family members, patients, etc.) in identifying, understanding and analyzing ethical issues in clinical medicine. (Jonsen et al. 1993)

A clinical ethics consult will help to identify, to understand and to analyze ethical issues. The ethics consult will facilitate and support the decision-making process and the decision-makers in coming to a consensus. Other members of the organization may also be included depending on the nature of the issue (e.g., patient advocate, legal and risk services).

## PROCEDURE

Indications that you are experiencing an Ethical Dilemma:

- Two or more equally (un)desirable alternatives.
- Involves important value-laden issues (e.g., rights, duties, justice, fairness).
- Situation generally involves various stakeholders.
- Alternatives have far-reaching implications.

### A. Please follow the procedure as outlined,

1. Discuss the ethical issue with your manager, direct supervisor and/or the MRP.
2. If you belong to a professional college or association, refer to the Code of Ethics and/or the Ethics Framework to further reflect on the dilemma.
3. Utilize the ethics framework, ethics worksheet and Health Ethics Guide provided in the Ethics Resource Binder on each unit and available on the intranet to further consider the dilemma.
4. If you require assistance in this process and/or need further clarification, contact the Executive Assistant to the ELT Ethics Committee Liaison.
5. Contact the ELT Ethics Committee Liaison or present your issues to any Ethics Committee representative for discussion at the first available committee meeting opportunity (these types of issues are more often organizational and persistent, as opposed to being case-specific).
6. Consult other resources, as needed. (e.g., legal and/or risk, patient advocacy, etc.).

## REFERENCES

A. Jonsen, M. Siegler, and W. Winslade. Clinical Ethics. *International Journal of Legal Medicine*. 1993 Jun;14(2):355-7.

Health Ethics Guide. *Catholic Health Alliance of Canada*. Novalis. August 2012.

