



Ethics Committee

Ethics Committee of St. Elizabeth Healthcare

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Course Information

- **Target Audience:** SEH Volunteers.
- This CBL includes **13** content slides. There are **1 activity** in this module.
- You *must* review each slide for completion credit.
- This module includes **1** assessment.
- Final assessment requires **passing score of 90%**. You have **unlimited** attempts.
- ***Technical issues?*** Contact the helpdesk (859) 301-2541 or sdexpress.helpdesk@stelizabeth.com
- ***Content questions?*** Contact Austin.Schafer@stelizabeth.com.
- **Shared computer?** Clear history and cookies (via browser settings). *Not doing so could impact CBL completion on transcript.*

Objectives

After completion, I will be able to:

- **Explain** the functions of the St. Elizabeth Ethics Committee.
- **State** the most frequent misunderstanding about the Ethics Committee's role.
- **Find** the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Healthcare Services.
- **List six principles** used to resolve ethical conflicts.
- **Give three examples** of how the ethics committee can help caregivers, patients, and families.
- **Describe** how to access the Ethics Committee.

Definitions Related to Ethics

Personal Ethics

- An individual's standards of conduct and values, often based in religion and culture.

Professional Ethics

- Standards of conduct and values defined by a profession for its members

Bioethics

- Ethical questions surrounding life and death; often involve quality of life and use of technology. *The St. Elizabeth Ethics Committee is a bioethics committee.*

Ethical dilemma or conflict

- A situation in which an individual must choose between two alternatives when neither is desirable.

A photograph of a male doctor with a beard and glasses, wearing a white lab coat, standing and talking to a female nurse with short brown hair, wearing blue scrubs. They are in a hospital setting. A large blue oval is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

Consultation and Education

Consultation and Policy Review

- To advise and serve as a resource to St. Elizabeth
- To clarify complex ethical issues that arise in the care of our patients.

Education

- To assist in the development of educational programs related to bioethics.



Ethics Consultation

- Usually called when there is confusion and/or disagreement about how to proceed in a difficult clinical situation.
- Most commonly, these conflicts arise over end-of-life care and mother/baby complications.

Factors Involved in Ethics Consultations

Legislation and regulatory guidelines

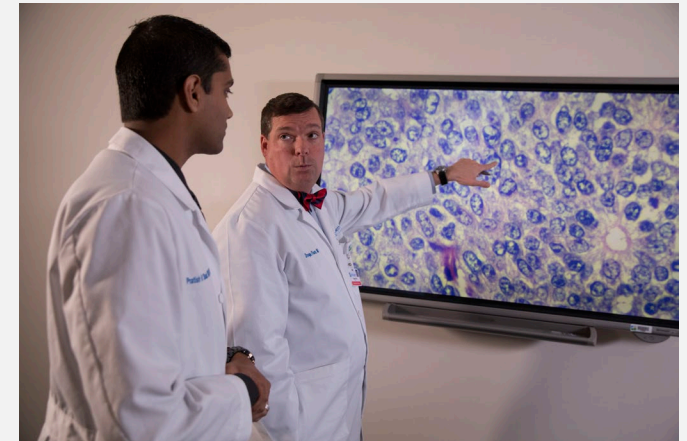
- Brain death now determines death. Death used to be defined as cessation of breathing and heart function. How defined affects harvesting of organs.

Science and technology

- Life sustaining equipment can also prolong dying process.

Societal influences

- Rights of the individual now more important, demand for say in own care now seen as a right.



How Ethics Committees Help

An Ethics Committee consult includes:

- Listening to patients, families, physicians, and clinical associates.
- Identifying the conflicting bioethical issues.
- Supporting all through the process to resolve complicated, stressful patient care situations.



Hospital Bioethics Committees do not make decisions.

This is a common misconception about the role of an ethics committee.

Final decisions are made by the patient, family and the health care team.

The background of the slide features two panels of stained glass. The left panel shows the Annunciation, with the Angel Gabriel in a yellow robe and purple cloak standing and speaking to the Virgin Mary, who is kneeling in prayer in a blue robe. The right panel shows St. Elizabeth, a bearded man with a halo, seated and gesturing with his hand. Above him, another figure is partially visible. The entire scene is set within a dark, ornate frame.

Our Faith-Based Heritage

- ▶ St. Elizabeth Healthcare follows the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' **Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services**.
- ▶ **These directives can be located on your unit/department on:**
 - Your unit/department Bulletin board
 - [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#)
 - From your leader

The purpose of these **Ethical and Religious Directives** is twofold:

- *First*, to reaffirm the ethical standards of behavior in health care that flow from the Church's teaching about the dignity of the human person;
- *Second*, to provide authoritative guidance on certain moral issues that face Catholic health care today.



Ethical and Religious Directives

From the preamble to the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*, 6th Edition, 2016.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Principles of Ethical Decision-Making

Six principles pertaining to ethical decision-making and potential conflicts that may arise.

Beneficence

Nonmaleficence

Autonomy

Justice

Fidelity

Veracity

Beneficence

Do good.

Potential Conflict:

When caregivers and patient differ about what is “good”.

Beneficence

Nonmaleficence

Autonomy

Justice

Fidelity

Veracity

Nonmaleficence

Do no harm.

Potential Conflict:

Treatment may initially cause harm, although outcome is potentially good, such as with treatment for cancer. Conflict happens when there is disagreement about when is treatment overly burdensome for the patient compared to the potential benefit.

Beneficence

Nonmaleficence

Autonomy

Justice

Fidelity

Veracity

Autonomy

Right of the individual to make own decisions.

Potential Conflict:

Caregivers must respect patient's decision even if the decision is in direct conflict with the health care provider's opinion.

Beneficence

Nonmaleficence

Autonomy

Justice

Fidelity

Veracity

Justice

Fairness to all.

Potential Conflict:

One type of justice is distributive justice, deals with the use of limited resources; considers the most benefit for the most people.

Beneficence

Nonmaleficence

Autonomy

Justice

Fidelity

Veracity

Fidelity

Faithfulness to commitments.

Potential Conflict:

Multiple demands on caregiver's time can lead to conflict. This principle underlies the responsibility to not abandon patients.

Beneficence

Nonmaleficence

Autonomy

Justice

Fidelity

Veracity

Veracity

Telling the truth.

Potential Conflict:

We are obliged to tell the patient the truth. Example of conflict is when family does not want patient to know the diagnosis.



When to Call Our Ethics Committee

Any patient, family member, physician or associate may contact the *Ethics Committee*:

- To ask questions or seek consultation on ethical and/or moral questions that arise.
- To discuss ethical and/or moral issues or concerns.
- To seek help to deal with a conflict with patient/family issues regarding care or treatment decisions.



How to Contact the Ethics Committee



Nursing supervisor on duty (*best method*)



Hospital chaplain on duty



Ethics Committee member

Summary

- The **functions** of the St. Elizabeth Ethics Committee
- The **most frequent misunderstanding** about the Ethics Committee's role
- Where to find a copy of the:

*Ethical and Religious Directives for
Catholic Healthcare Services*

- **Six ethical principles** used to resolve ethical conflicts
- **Three examples of when the Ethics Committee can help** caregivers, patients, and families
- **How to access** the Ethics Committee



References

- United States Conference of Catholic Bishop's
- *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services. Sixth Edition*

Review



1. The St. Elizabeth Ethics Committee is concerned with:
 - A. Professional Ethics
 - B. Personal Ethics
 - C. Bioethics
2. Ethics committees make decisions for the patient, family and health care team
 - A. True
 - B. False
3. St. Elizabeth Ethics Committee is guided by the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services
 - A. True
 - B. False

Review



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4. The Ethical and Religious Directives flow from the Church's teaching about the dignity of the human person
 - A. True
 - B. False

 5. The ethical principle of beneficence means
 - A. Do good
 - B. Do no harm
 - C. Individuals have a right to make their own decisions
 - D. Being faithful to commitments
 - E. Telling the truth

Review

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6. The ethical principle of autonomy means
- A. Do good
 - B. Do no harm
 - C. Individuals have a right to make their own decisions
 - D. Being faithful to commitments
 - E. Telling the truth
7. The ethical principle of nonmaleficence means:
- A. Do good
 - B. Do no harm
 - C. Individuals have a right to make their own decisions
 - D. Being faithful to commitments
 - E. Telling the truth

Review

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8. The best way to contact the Ethics Committee is to contact the Nursing Supervisor on duty.
 - A. True
 - B. False
 9. An Ethics Consult can only be requested by the physician.
 - A. True
 - B. False
 10. The Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services can be located:
 - A. Unit/department bulletin board.
 - B. Website: <http://www.usccb.org/about/doctrine/ethical-and-religious-directives/index.cfm>
 - C. Your leader
 - D. Any of the above