



# CLINICAL ETHICS CONSULTATION

## THE BASICS OF CLINICAL ETHICS

Ethics is a discipline born out of philosophy and religion that pertains to the "good and bad" or "right and wrong" notions that shape moral life in our community. Clinical ethics is multidisciplinary field blending philosophy, theology, history, and law with medicine, nursing, health policy, and the medical humanities to address ethics concerns in healthcare. Clinical ethics in healthcare systems often involves ethics consultation, a service that seeks to resolve uncertainty or conflict regarding value-laden concerns that come up in healthcare.

## HOW WE CAN HELP

### Clinical Ethics Consultation

A clinical ethics consult should be requested when there are value uncertainties or conflicts that underlie patient care. These are some questions you may have:

- Should this treatment be started – what are the benefits and burdens?
- Should this treatment be stopped – is it causing more suffering than good?
- Who is authorized to speak for a patient who cannot make his or her own medical decisions?
- What happens when the medical team and the patient or patient’s family/loved ones disagree about what’s best for a patient? When there are disagreements among members of the medical team? Among family members?
- When in doubt, call! *We will accompany you to the right department if it is not primarily a clinical ethics concern.*

### Requesting a Clinical Ethics Consultation

You will be asked your name, the name of the patient and a brief description of your ethical concern. Your request will be forwarded to the on-call Clinical Ethicist/Ethics Consultant supporting your facility. You may ask that your name be withheld from others on the medical team and from the patient and/or the patient’s family. Please be prepared to share the urgency of your request. Urgent requests will receive a response within four hours after the request has been made.

***Whatever your question may be, the Clinical Ethics team is here to help!***

### How to Contact Clinical Ethics

- 24/7 Call Line: 844-307-2721
- Epic/Dimensions consult order
- Voalte
- Email

**The Role of Clinical Ethicists & Ethics Consultants**  
Ethics Consultants (including Clinical Ethicists) provide a vital service for patients, their families/loved ones, and the medical team during times of stress and uncertainty. They employ effective communication and mediation skills to facilitate resolution of ethically complex matters arising in the course of clinical care.

Ethics consultants respond to requests for an “Ethics Consult.” Typically working in collaboration with other Ethics Consultants, they promote reasoned, compassionate and neutral consideration of ethical concerns in a manner that takes into account current medical and scientific evidence AND respects the diverse values, goals and preferences of patients, families/loved ones, and members of the medical team. The aim of the clinical ethics consultation process is to identify and develop ethically justifiable recommendations, not to make decisions on behalf of others.

## WHO WE ARE

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