

Ethics Policy

Jersey City Medical Center

Policy

The Ethics Committee is an interdisciplinary forum within Jersey City Medical Center which provides a sustained commitment to focus on current sound ethical principles in patient care and decision-making, to include the provision of care and treatment.

Any health care provider, patient or family member may refer to the Ethics Committee for guidance and advice, or review of an ethical question or dilemma. The referral can be made by contacting the Patient Advocate or the Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner.

Purpose

To provide advice and consultation to health care professionals, patients and families on ethical dilemmas which may arise in the course of the provision of medical care and patient/family decision-making.

- Provide an available forum to health care professionals, patients and families for analyzing ethical questions which arise in the care of individual patients involving three basic categories: a) A genuine dispute or disagreement between the health care providers regarding the ethical aspects of the patient's care; b) A complex ethical issue where there is significant ethical ambiguity or confusion; c) An issue involving the withholding or withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment which is not adequately addressed in existing policy or procedures.
- To assist the hospital and its professional staff in developing policies and procedures on ethical issues, questions and problems.
 - Review and evaluate policies and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure that they are consistent with standards of ethical practice and any changes in the law.
- To educate the committee members, the hospital community and the general public on topics, concerns and questions involving clinical ethics.
 - Develop an up-to-date reading list for current committee members to keep abreast of any new developments or changes in the law or ethics, including journal articles, books, conferences and workshops.

- Provide the hospital community with in-service training on new policy developments, guidance on how to use and when to consult with the Ethics Committee in advance or retrospectively on a particular ethical dilemma.
- Provide the hospital community and the community at large with educational activities to explain and promote Advance Directives and organ donation.

Procedure

1) Position Within the Institution

The Ethics Committee is directly accountable to the Jersey City Medical Center Administration through Patient Safety, Quality Management & Regulatory Affairs, and reports through the SVP of Patient Safety and Quality Management to the Executive Committee of the Medical Staff for informational purposes.

2) Principles

The work of the Ethics Committee will be guided by the principles of autonomy of the competent patient, the protection of patients who lack decisional capacity, the recognition of rights, needs, and concerns of the patients and their families, and the maintenance of the integrity of the health services professions.

3) Functions

- A) Education: To keep the hospital staff, physicians, patients and families informed on ethical issues by:
- a) Providing continuing education for the Ethics Committee and the hospital community.
 - b) Publicizing current developments in ethics to promote a common understanding of policy, procedures and jurisdiction for ethical decision-making and;
 - c) Performing retrospective review of cases to provide insight and guidance for future situations.
- B) Policy Development: To identify specific ethical concerns and to recommend hospital guidelines, policy and procedures in light of

changes in law, judiciary review, current research, and case review of ethical consults.

- a) To assist other hospital committees and medical staff by providing advice and research.
- C) Consultation in Patient Care: To provide trained Ethics Consultants to assist patients, families, physicians and other caregivers in resolving ethical and related issues.
- D) Case Review: To provide a forum for retrospective review of Ethical Consults. Patient care issues of ethical significance can be discussed in order to enhance the quality of patient services and support of patients, families, physicians, and hospital staff in resolution of ethical dilemmas.

4) **Membership and Meetings**

- A) **Chair**: The Chairperson(s) of the Ethics Committee is appointed on the recommendation of, and consultation with, the Senior Vice President of Patient Safety and Quality Management and the President of the Medical Staff.
- B) **Committee Members**: The members of the committee are recommended by the Ethics Committee and approved by the Chairperson(s). The Ethics Committee also recommends the physician members of the Committee who are approved by the President of the Medical Staff.
 - a. The terms of membership will be for two years with no restrictions regarding reappointment.
 - b. Membership will include, but not limited to the following:
 - Physicians
 - Nursing
 - Social Services
 - Respiratory Therapy
 - Pastoral Care
 - Regulatory Affairs
 - Nursing Education
 - Administration
 - Community

- C) **Ad-hoc Subcommittees of the Ethics Committee**: May be appointed by the Chairperson(s) of the Ethics Committee at any time in order to address specific issues and/or perform specific tasks. Subcommittees may include additional representatives from the constituencies described in Section B.2, as well as current members of the Ethics Committee, in order to bring relevant expertise to the subcommittee.

- D) **Meeting Frequency**: The Ethics Committee will meet quarterly, or more often if needed.

Ethics Proceedings

The official proceedings and minutes of the Ethics Committee are confidential. Information considered by the Ethics Committee shall, to the fullest extent permitted by law, be confidential, and shall not be used in any way except as provided in these bylaws. Cases reviewed by the Ethics Committee shall not be discussed outside of the meeting proceedings.