

WHO WILL BE PRESENT AT AN ETHICS CONSULT?

Attendance at an ethics consultation will depend on the issue and the kind of consultation requested. We encourage open and frank discussion of all ethical concerns, but we recognize a decision can be a very private matter. Only those directly involved in the particular case (client, substitute decision maker, family member, care providers, appropriate resource persons) will attend.

An ethics consultation will normally include:

- The person(s) who requests the ethics consult, this may be a patient, resident, client, substitute decision maker, family member or staff member;
- At least one support person for the one who has made the request (if he or she wishes to have a support person). Arrangements can also be made for a translator, if required;
- A professional ethicist;
- The physician responsible for the care of the individual;
- One or two other members of the patient's care team (e.g. nurse, pastoral worker, social worker, respiratory therapists, etc.) who are familiar with the case;
- Representatives from the Ethics Committees sometimes attend ethics consultations.



PROVINCIAL HEALTH ETHICS NETWORK NEWFOUNDLAND LABRADOR (PHENNL)

The four Regional Health Authorities and the Department of Health and Community Services are partners in PHENNL.

PHENNL provides support for

Ethics Education;

Policy Review and Development;

Clinical and Administrative Case Consultations.

HOW CAN I ARRANGE FOR AN ETHICS CONSULT?

Any patient, resident, client, family or staff member can bring forward an issue for an ethics consult by contacting:

Labrador-Grenfell Health

Phone: (709) 897-3103

Fax: (709) 896-4032

www.lghealth.ca

Eastern Health Office of the Director of PHENNL

Phone: (709) 777-8940

Fax: (709) 777-7612

www.easternhealth.ca

Central Health

Phone: (709) 257-5226

Fax: (709) 257-4613

www.centralhealth.nl.ca

Western Health

Phone: (709) 634-4350

Fax: (709) 634-4591

www.westernhealth.nl.ca

Or ask a staff member to make the contact for you.



Labrador-Grenfell
Health

Ethics Consultation Service

Labrador-Grenfell Health

Phone: (709) 897-2282

Fax: (709) 896-4032

Provincial Health Ethics Network Newfoundland Labrador



Eastern
Health



Western
Health



Labrador-Grenfell
Health



Central
Health

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ETHICS CONSULTATION SERVICE

At times, having to make health care decisions for yourself, for someone you love, or for a person you are taking care of, can be very difficult. An ethics consultation can help you work to an ethical decision in a difficult case.

An Ethics Consultation will provide an opportunity to discuss the issue or concern with a group who will bring a variety of viewpoints and information to assist with your decision making. The purpose is to assist you but not make the decision for you.

Ethics Consultations provide a safe environment and non-judgmental process for open and honest discussion among interested and involved parties. The richness of this process lies in the openness and free discussion that it fosters. An Ethics Consultation helps participants discover different perspectives on an issue or problem and explore the ethically right options.

WHAT IS AN "ETHICAL DECISION?"

"Ethics" examines our basic moral values, helping us understand what we should or should not do. Most times our values make it easy to determine the morally right thing to do. Sometimes there can be a conflict of values within oneself or among people. For example, most people value telling the truth. They also value acting in a way that will not harm other people. But what if telling someone the truth about their medical condition might cause them harm? Any time two or more moral values conflict we have a moral dilemma, the right or wrong option is not always clear.

The Ethics Consultation Service is available for patients, residents, clients, families, staff, or anyone who needs help in making ethical decisions about health care.

HOW CAN AN ETHICS CONSULT HELP ME?

An ethics consult is an opportunity to discuss an ethical issue or problem. You will meet with others familiar with your situation, and who have experience dealing with the kind of decisions you must make. Those involved in the Ethics Consult will not tell you what to do, but they will help you understand and resolve your conflicting values and feelings.

Ethics consultation are not intended to address personal problems between clients and staff, between family members, or between staff members. Other avenues are available to handle such issues.

WHAT KINDS OF ETHICAL DECISIONS CAN A CONSULT HELP WITH?

The Ethics Consultation Service will help people with many different kinds of ethical decisions.

Examples include:

- Should we turn off the respirator and allow this (terminally ill) patient to die?
- Should we consent to the insertion of a feeding tube?
- Should we tell our father he has cancer and only has a short time to live?
- We want to do what is best for our child, but we don't know what that is. How do we decide?
- We can no longer provide the care at home for our frail mother, who said she never wanted to go to a nursing home. What can we do?
- We know a person who is refusing to accept help and support in his home. Can he live at risk?
- Our brother has severe mental illness, sometimes he stops his medications. What should we do?



HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO ARRANGE A CONSULT?

Some life and death issues require immediate attention, while other issues allow more time to organize a consultation. A full consultation can usually be arranged within three days. A professional ethicist and an ethics facilitator are available for urgent consults at any time.

WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD I PROVIDE WHEN I MAKE A REQUEST?

Please provide, where possible, the following information:

- Brief description of the issue/concern.
- At which site or service has the issue/concern arisen.
- Names of other individuals who may be able to provide further information.
- Please note timelines that the ethicist/facilitator should know about.
- An Ethics Consultation Request Form is available on the Labrador-Grenfell Health Website:
 - www.lghealth.ca



WHAT HAPPENS TO MY REQUEST FOR A CONSULTATION?

Your request will be reviewed with you by an ethics consultation facilitator, usually within one to two days, to ensure that you have been given enough information to explore all your options. If a discussion of the ethical issue or concern seems appropriate, then a session is arranged.