

Bio-Ethics Consultation Service/Institutional Ethics

Intent: Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) of the Parkland Health & Hospital System (PHHS) functions as a committee of the Medical Staff Bylaws. This committee provides consultation to physicians, nurses, and families regarding Bio-Ethics issues when requested. Procedures are outlined by which interested person can receive consultation concerning Bio-Ethics issues and or dilemmas arising from the clinical care of patients. Specifically, the service's purposes are:

- a. to function as an educational resource on ethics for the PHHS community;
- b. to provide a forum for discussion of ethical conflicts arising during the care of patients at PHHS; and
- c. to act as a referral source on health law matters.

Physicians, health care workers, patients, and or the patients' family/surrogate may request consultation from the IEC.

Mechanisms for Obtaining Consultation:

Consultation services are available 24-hours a day, 7 days per week.

- a. Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. call 214-648-4960.
- b. All other hours, page the Ethics Consultant at 214-786-7814.
- c. Chaplain may assist with identifying consultation needs and can be reached on pager 214-786-8108.

Consultations may take the format of:

- a. informal provision of information; or
- b. informal discussion with parties to a conflict or dilemma; or
- c. formal presentation of conflicts or dilemmas to an ad hoc sub-committee or a regularly scheduled meeting of the IEC.

Features of Consultations:

- a. Initial response: One or both co-chairpersons of the IEC or their designee will respond in a timely manner to request for consultation; will discuss the issue involved with a person(s) requesting assistance; and, if indicated, will arrange for further evaluation and input from other members on the committee.
- b. Convening the Consultation: When a committee consultation is required, the IEC Chair or designee will convene a representative group of physicians, nurses, and allied health professionals to consider the problem or dilemma. Family and/or the patient have rights to be aware of the consultation and to speak with the Consultation Committee. If the consultation is convened pursuant to Part IV of the "Guidelines for Treatment and Life-Support

Decision Making ("IV. Refusal to Honor an Advance Directive or Treatment Decision"), the patient or surrogate decision maker shall be notified of the time and location at least 48 hours before the meeting, unless this time period is waived by mutual consent.

- c. Methods: Consultations will invite all relevant and interested persons to participate in discussing the problem and/or presenting a perspective. A note in the patient record may be made to indicate a consultation was provided. For consultations convened pursuant to Part IV of the "Guidelines for Treatment and Life-Support Decision Making ("IV. Refusal to Honor an Advance Directive or Treatment Decision"), a standard form sign-in sheet should be used (see Attachment "A" hereto). In addition, one of the co-chairs of the IEC shall prepare a written summary of the consultation that conforms to the description in Attachment "B" to this policy, shall deliver the summary to the patient (or the surrogate decision maker if the patient is incompetent), and shall retain a copy in the IEC's records.
- d. Confidentiality: Unless a summary of the consultation has been prepared pursuant to Part IV ("Refusal to Honor an Advance Directive or Treatment Decision") of the "Guidelines for Treatment and Life-Support Decision Making," specific identification of patients or persons involved will not be part of the permanent records of the IEC, but cases may be used for teaching in case study format. Privacy and confidentiality for patients, physicians, or other health care workers will be protected.
- e. Decisions: The consultation provided will not usurp or disrupt the decision-making relationship between physicians and patients/families/surrogates. The results of the consultations are not binding upon the parties involved.

ATTACHMENT "A"

Dallas County Hospital District
Parkland Memorial Hospital
Institutional Ethics Committee

CONSULTATION SIGN-IN SHEET

Date: _____ Time: _____

Name (please print)	Institutional Affiliaton or Relationship to Patient

ATTACHMENT "B"SUMMARY OF ETHICS CONSULTATION

An ethics consultation is required by our Guidelines for Treatment and Life-Support Decision Making and state law whenever a physician refuses to honor a treatment decision concerning life support or an advance directive. In addition, the patient (or surrogate decision maker) is entitled to receive a summary of the ethics committee's "review" or consultation in connection with the physician's refusal. The summary should include the following elements:

1. name of patient,
2. date and time of consultation,
3. date and time patient or surrogate received notification of the meeting,
4. name of participants in attendance (this can be done by attaching a photocopy of the sign-in sheet), and
5. brief descriptions of:
 - (a) the patient's condition, including diagnosis and competency
 - (b) the patient's prognosis (with and without the disputed treatment)
 - (c) the outcome of the consultation process, including the committee's recommendation (if it made one).

The summary should be brief and nonjudgmental in tone. The summary will be provided to the patient (or patient's surrogate), and copies will be placed in the patient's medical record and retained by the ethics committee