

An Ethics Consultation: What is it?

An Ethics Consultation can be arranged to provide a confidential forum to discuss complex health care situations.

Some examples of complex health care situations include:

- End-of-life decisions such as tube feedings, pain management and breathing supports;
- Situations that are creating conflicts within families;
- Difficult treatment decisions;
- Situations that are confusing or overwhelming;
- “Do not resuscitate” questions.

The Ethics Advisory Committee can help you with difficult decisions by:

- Collecting as much information as possible on the situation and the viewpoints of everyone involved so we are sure that we understand the issues.
- Using that information to identify what the question/dilemma is and what the possible options are.
- Considering treatment and medical issues, patient and family preferences, quality of life and death and anything else that may impact on the situation.
- Identifying alternative approaches to the situation.
- Evaluating each of the alternatives by considering the patient and family wishes, the potential benefits and harms of each alternative and legal requirements.
- Providing support to the patient and loved ones who are involved in this difficult decision making.

What does the Ethics Advisory Committee do?

The Ethics advisory Committee does not make decisions, but rather helps the individuals involved in a difficult situation to examine the issue by considering all perspectives and options. The Ethics Advisory Committee provides support for patients, families and health service providers who are facing ethical questions. The Committee consists of health professionals and community members.



Madawaska Communities Circle of Health (MCCH) is a

community integration collaborative with representatives from local health care and community organizations. Its membership works together in a supportive network to enhance the experience of our patients/ residents/ clients. By working together, we leverage the knowledge and expertise across different sectors of, and improve the access to ethics consultation services.

“Ethical living is the indispensable condition of all that is most worthwhile in the world.”

Ernest Caldecott

**Remember, we’re here to help –
the final decision is yours.**

The purpose is to help you make decisions that are right for you and your loved ones based on the best information available.

Who can request a consultation?



Anyone can make a referral:

- Patients/Residents
- Families
- Health workers

How Do I Request a Consultation?

The Submitter:

- If unable to reach a resolution to identified ethical dilemmas following consultation with other care team members, patient and family, considers the option of submitting the dilemma to the MCCH Joint Ethics Advisory Committee. Advises patient and family that they also have the option to consult with the MCCH Joint Ethics Advisory Committee and provides appropriate information and assistance.
- Contacts one of the MCCH Ethics Advisory Committee representatives to initiate an informal discussion of the situation. This list can also be found on the SFMH & Valley Manor websites.
- Completes a *Consultation Request* in collaboration with the representative if the decision is made to submit the dilemma to the Committee. Ensures that any urgency to the situation is clearly communicated to the Committee.
- Provides further information as requested by the Committee. Retains the option of speaking directly to the Committee.
- Receives the written *Response to Submitter* from the Committee which will include recommendations and options. Asks for clarification and guidance from the Committee as required.
- Implements selected recommendation(s) in collaboration with the care team, patient and family.
- Completes an *Evaluation—MCCH Joint Ethics Committee Consultation* form (optional).

The Ethics Advisory Committee is a joint committee. The expectation of the time to resolve an issue is dependent on the nature of the matter.

The committee is comprised, at minimum, of the following members:

- **St. Francis Memorial Hospital** 613-756-3044
- **Valley Manor** 613-756-2643
- **Barry’s Bay & Area Home Support** 613-756-2772
- **Madawaska Valley Hospice** 613-756-3045
- **Madawaska Valley Association for
Community Living** 613-756-3817

CASE CONSULTATION REQUEST

Date of Request: _____

Requested by: _____

Department: _____

Purpose of Consultation: _____

Urgency of Request:

- Urgent—as soon as possible
- Somewhat urgent—within 5 days
- Not urgent—within 1 month

Recommended participants: _____

Will patient, resident and/or family members be invited? Yes No

Other comments: _____

REVIEW OF ETHICAL CASES



Health care teams can present a case summary to Ethics Committee anytime

Madawaska Communities Circle of Health

JOINT ETHICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WHAT IS ETHICS?

“Ethics” considers how we ought to live, that is, how we ought to treat others and how we ought to live our own lives. An ethics consultation will help to answer the question “What do I do?” in a particular situation.



Have you had to ask yourself questions such as these?

- ♦ *As a patient / resident, am I making the best decision for me?*
- ♦ *As a loved one, how will I make the right choices for my family member, if they are no longer able to speak for themselves?*
- ♦ *Will my opinions and values be respected?*
- ♦ *Have I looked at all the options?*