

Elective: Health Care Ethics

OVERVIEW

This elective is open to fourth-year students seeking to complement the curriculum in ethics and law addressed in the undergraduate medical education program

By completing the elective in Health Care Ethics, the student will be able to demonstrate:

- An enhanced understanding of basic concepts in health care ethics.
- An ability to identify ethical features embedded in clinical practice.
- An ability to analyze an ethical issue in clinical practice (e.g. articulate critical ethical reasoning, compare/contrast content of ethical positions) and to formulate a recommended position/resolution based on this analysis.
- An ability to formulate a plan of action to realize the recommended position/resolution (i.e. needed communication skills, knowledge of procedural options/ remedies, etc.)

INTRODUCTION

Location(s):

St Boniface Hospital
Room A1125
409 Taché Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R2H 2A6

Preceptors:

Pat Murphy
Clinical Ethicist
Telephone: 237-2990
Email: murphypa@sbgh.mb.ca

and/or

George C. Webster
Clinical Ethicist
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LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CanMEDS)

Medical Expert

As Medical Experts, physicians integrate all of the CanMEDS Roles, applying medical knowledge, clinical skills and professional attitudes in their provision of patient-centered care.

The student can expect to be actively involved in the service.

Communicator

Physicians effectively facilitate the doctor-patient relationship and the dynamic exchanges that occur before, during, and after the medical encounter.

As Communicators, students will facilitate the doctor-patient relationship.

Collaborator

Physicians effectively work within a healthcare team to achieve optimal patient care.

As Collaborators, students will work effectively within the surgical team to achieve optimal patient care.

Leader

Physicians engage with others to contribute to a vision of a high-quality health care system and take responsibility for the delivery of excellent patient care through their activities as clinicians, administrators, scholars, or teachers.

As Leaders, students will participate in the activities of the surgical service, making decisions, allocating resources, and contributing to the effectiveness of the health care team.

Health Advocate

Physicians responsibly use their expertise and influence to advance the health and well-being of individual patients, communities and populations.

As Health Advocates, students will responsibly use their expertise and influence to advance the health and well-being of individual patients, communities and populations.

Scholar

Physicians demonstrate a lifelong commitment to reflective learning, as well as the creation, dissemination, application and translation of medical knowledge.

As Scholars, students will demonstrate a lifelong commitment to learning.

Professional

As Professionals, physicians are committed to the health and well-being of individuals and society through ethical practice, profession-led regulation, and high personal standards of behaviour.

As Professionals, students are committed to health and well-being of individuals through ethical practice, profession-led regulation and high personal standards of behavior.

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INFORMATION

In consultation with the preceptors, the student will identify a focus theme for the elective and learning objectives related to this theme. The focus theme may address:

- Foundational concepts in health care ethics: (e.g. harm/benefit, competence/capacity, duty of care, autonomy, etc.)
- Foundational concepts in professional ethics: (e.g. professionalism, unprofessional conduct, duty to society, self-regulation, etc.)
- General ethical issues in clinical practice: (e.g. informed decision making, decision making by third parties, involuntary treatment, compliance and adherence to treatment; privacy and confidentiality; cultural sensitivity in clinical practice, medical errors and mistakes, etc.)
- Ethical issues in specific clinical areas: (e.g. use of complementary/alternative therapies in oncology; parental refusal of therapies recommended for neonate/child; assessments of “futility” and end-of-life care in ICU; withholding/withdrawing assisted nutrition and hydration in geriatric medicine; prenatal genetic testing and screening; ethical issues in transplant medicine; “therapeutic privilege” and the practice of psychiatry, internal medicine and the care of patients with “unhealthy” lifestyles; harm reduction practices and public health, etc.)

Expectations

The elective activities are tailored to the student’s focus theme(s) and may include:

- readings on selected topics and subsequent discussion with advisors
- attendance at Ethics education rounds offered by Health Care Ethics Service and others (e.g. Palliative Care) during the elective period
- observation of ethics consultations (with consent of parties requesting same)
- structured interviews re: common ethical issues with clinicians in specific practice settings
- review of “classic” or paradigmatic cases in clinical ethics and health law
- preparation of an annotated bibliography on selected topic in clinical ethics
- review of literary readings/films related to selected theme
- engaging in simulated clinical ethics scenarios
- review of research literature in clinical ethics