



Clinical Staff Executive Committee

MEDICAL CENTER POLICY NO. 0105

- A. SUBJECT: Ethics and Patient Care Consultation
- B. EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013 (Rvd)
- C. POLICY:

The Ethics Committee of the Medical Center provides assistance with ethical problems pertaining to patient care through its interdisciplinary Ethics Consultation Service (ECS) and Patient Care Consulting Subcommittee.

An ethics consultation is a process by which trained consultants respond to requests for help to resolve ethical conflicts, issues, or questions involving patient care. An Ethics Consultation is advisory. Patients, family members, surrogates, and healthcare providers remain responsible for their own decisions. Clarification of ethically accepted courses of action can help the healthcare providers and patients navigate difficult clinical circumstances.

The ECS maintains a policy of open consultation. Patients, family members, surrogates¹, healthcare providers, or others with an established relationship with the patient may make requests for ethics consultation.

Medical Center staff is encouraged to seek timely involvement of the ECS in ethically troublesome situations. Persons requesting ethics consultation may do so without intimidation or fear of reprisal.

Patient Care Consulting Subcommittee consultation is required to:

1. Appoint an unrelated adult as the agent for healthcare decisions ([See Medical Center Policy No. 0024 "Informed Decision-making"](#)); or
2. Permit an agent for healthcare decisions to make decisions over an incapacitated patient's protest. ([See Medical Center Policy No. 0191 "Refusal of Treatment"](#)).

All participants in ethics and patient care consultations will conform to the Medical Center policy on confidentiality. ([See Medical Center Policy No. 0021 "Confidentiality of Patient Information"](#)).

¹ "Surrogates" has the same meaning as such terms as "legal representative," "patient's authorized agent," "healthcare agent," and "legally authorized representative" appearing in other Medical Center policies.

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D. PROCEDURE:

1. Requests for ethics consultation are made by calling Ethics (PIC #1712, page operator 924-0001). A consulting team is on call 24 hours/day. If a Patient Care Consulting Subcommittee consultation is required, the consultant will notify the Chair of the Ethics Committee who will activate the patient care consultation.
2. The ECS will verify that the Attending Physician has been informed that an ethics consultation has been requested. If the Attending Physician objects to the consultation, the matter will be referred to the chair of the Ethics Committee who will facilitate resolution.
3. The patient or the patient's surrogate decision-maker must consent to any ethics consultation involving patient contact.
4. If the patient or the patient's surrogate refuses to participate in the ethics consultation and if such participation is necessary for the consultation, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Ethics Committee.
5. If appropriate to a particular patient, the ECS will place a summary of the consultation in the patient's medical record.
6. If the ECS is unable to resolve the problem or if the individuals who requested the ethics consultation or individuals who participated in the consultation process believe that the ECS was unable to provide adequate assistance or guidance in connection with the ethical issues that were raised, the Chair of the Ethics Committee shall be so advised. In such circumstances, the Chair will determine what subsequent action, if any, is needed and may appoint other consultants to attempt to provide additional assistance.
7. The ECS is not intended nor authorized to provide legal advice on patient care. Legal questions and concerns regarding patient care should be referred to the University General Counsel.
8. The Patient Care Consulting Subcommittee shall consist of five individuals, including at least one physician, nurse and social worker. Two members shall have no employment, contractual, governance or management relationship to the Medical Center. Members will be appointed by the Ethics Committee. A quorum will require four members of the subcommittee.
9. There will be no charges, billing or fees for service for ethics consultation.

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SIGNATURE:

Robert S Gibson

Robert S. Gibson, M.D., President, Clinical Staff

R. Edward Howell

R. Edward Howell, CEO, UVA Medical Center

6/20/13

DATE:

Medical Center Policy No. 0105 (Rvd)

Approved November 6, 1984

Reviewed June 2013

Revised November 1987, February 1990, February 1993, November 1996, August 1999, November 2002, March 2005, March 2008, June 2010

Approved by the Ethics Committee

Approved by the Clinical Staff Executive Committee