What is ethics consultation?

Ethics consultation is a service provided by specially trained VA staff. When there is uncertainty or conflict about the right thing to do, ethics consultants work with patients, families and staff to help them make good decisions to resolve these concerns.

Ethics consultants will not investigate complaints or allegations of misconduct. These are handled by the Patient Advocate Office.

If you wish to seek help from the Ethics Consultation Service contact:

Ethics Consultation Service
Chillicothe VA Medical Center
Phone: (740)779-5590
Or ask a staff member or the operator to contact the Ethics Consultation Service

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Not sure what to do?

Ask for an Ethics Consultation

In health care, patients and families often face the difficult question of "what should be done?" The best choice for one patient may be the wrong choice for another.

Your VA health care team is there to help you with these tough decisions. But if you are still not sure about what is right or what should be done, you may wish to request an ethics consultation.

When should I think about asking for an ethics consultation?

Here are some examples of why Veterans and families ask for an ethics consultation:

> "I have to make a serious decision about a treatment that could affect how long I may live. After talking it over with my health care team, I am still not sure I agree with the doctor's recommendation."

> "My mother is too sick to make her own decisions. How do I know what is best for her now?"

> "Our family is unsure and upset. We don't agree about the right thing to do for our brother's care."

What happens in an ethics consultation?

Ethics consultants will not make a decision for you—they will make sure that everyone's point of view is heard. They will also:

- Ask about your concerns.
- Gather information from all the people involved.
- Determine if other experts are needed. For example, lawyers will be asked for legal opinions; medical specialists will be asked for medical opinions.
- Identify possible options.
- Make recommendations to you and the other people involved.
- Write a note in your health record if the ethics consultation relates to your medical care.
- Ask you to fill out a feedback form that lets the ethics consultation team know about your overall experience. This form is voluntary and your health care will not be affected by whether you fill out this form.

Who can request an ethics consultation?

Anyone can ask for an ethics consultation.

What does an ethics consultation cost?

Ethics consultations are free. You will not be billed for an ethics consultation.

How do I request an ethics consultation?

To request an ethics consultation, contact the Ethics Consultation Service at your VA health care facility.

IntegratedEthics

Improving Ethics Quality in Health Care