

Beaumont[®]

Subject Clinical Ethics		No. 309	Page 1 of 2
Content Expert(s) Hospital Ethics Committee	Prior Issue Date 04/27/09	Issue Date 12/17/13	

PURPOSE

To assure that our patients and staff have a mechanism for addressing clinical ethical concerns in patient care. Beaumont Hospitals is committed to facilitating the resolution of conflicts between competing values and beliefs through a respectful response to inquiries while continuing to provide quality care.

DEFINITION

A clinical ethical issue exists when two or more important values that affect patient care seem to be in conflict. Examples include:

- Patient's welfare versus patient's right to make treatment decisions.
- Extending life versus ensuring comfort.
- Withholding information at family member's request versus patient's right to know.
- Patient's right to the best available treatment versus limited resources and cost control.

MECHANISM

Clinical ethics consultation.

SCOPE

A clinical ethics consultation provides recommendations that are advisory only. A clinical ethics consultation may be requested by a patient, patient's family or surrogate, visitor, volunteer, student, hospital employee or member of the medical, dental or allied health staff.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Initiation of a request for a clinical ethics consultation will not compromise a patient's care or the employment status of hospital personnel.
2. When a clinical ethics consultation is requested, the attending physician will be notified.
3. Concerns among members of the clinical team or between patient/family/surrogate and a member of the clinical team, which do not raise ethical issues, will be addressed according to departmental and hospital policies and may be referred to Medical, Nursing or Hospital Administration for further advice and consideration.

PATIENT CARE – CORPORATE POLICIES

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Subject Clinical Ethics		No. 309	Page 2 of 2
Content Expert(s) Hospital Ethics Committee	Prior Issue Date 04/27/09	Issue Date 12/17/13	

PROCEDURE

The procedure for initiating a clinical ethics consultation is outlined in procedure 309-1.

EDUCATION

The medical, nursing and allied health staffs are informed of the availability and the policy and procedure for initiating a clinical ethics consultation during staff orientation. The Medical Director of each hospital, in conjunction with the Hospital's Institutional Ethics Committee, is responsible for the continuing education of the staff on ethical issues.

Patients, families and surrogates are informed of the availability and the policy and procedure for initiating a clinical ethics consultation upon admission or shortly thereafter.

DETAILED PROCEDURE

309-1, Clinical Ethics Procedure

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