

Contacting a Bioethicist

Any staff, physician, patient or family member may contact UHN Bioethics for consultation..

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The Joint Centre for Bioethics

UHN bioethicists are members of The Joint Centre for Bioethics (JCB) which shares expertise with University Health Network on clinical, educational and research projects.

For further information regarding the Joint Centre for Bioethics refer to the web site:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/icb>

Bioethics at UHN

Revised March 2014

Information for hospital staff, patients and family members on Bioethics Consultation Services at UHN

What is a Bioethicist?

A Bioethicist is a professional who has been educated and trained to provide analysis useful in addressing ethical issues in healthcare. At UHN, Bioethicists provide:

- Clinical ethics consultations referred by patients, family members or staff who identify an ethical issue in patient care;
- Organizational ethics expertise, including the development of policies and guidelines to prevent or better manage ethical issues;
- Ethics education for clinical staff, and students from the University of Toronto;
- Research ethics expertise in advising the design of research and evaluating protocols submitted to the Research Ethics Board;
- Original research on areas of specialty, including transplantation and rehabilitation ethics.

Examples of Situations where a Bioethicist can help

Sometimes a patient may be unable to express their wishes about what treatments they want or do not want.

A patient's Substitute Decision-Maker may find themselves in a difficult circumstance where the healthcare team tells them certain treatments should not be offered because they will not benefit the patient. However, what is medically beneficial may be different from the values or goals of the patient, Substitute Decision-Maker, or other family members.

UHN Bioethicists can help each of these parties understand their role in these difficult circumstances. When disagreements arise, the Bioethicist can help mediate the discussion.