



Team Name: Regional Ethics Committee	Reference Number: ORG.1810.PL.005
Team Lead: Regional Director Quality, Patient Safety & Risk	Program Area: Quality, Patient Safety, Risk and Ethics
Approved by: Executive Director-North	Policy Section: General
Issue Date: March 10 2015	Subject: Ethical Decision Making
Review Date:	
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POLICY SUBJECT:
Ethical Decision Making

PURPOSE:
Southern Health-Santé Sud recognizes that ethical dilemmas in health care are a reality and therefore has adopted a Framework for Ethical Decision Making. This Framework promotes ethical processes thereby supporting our core values of integrity, compassion, excellence, and respect. Ethical issues that cannot be resolved at the local level will be addressed in accordance with the Ethics Resource Algorithm ORG.1810.PL.005.SD.01.

BOARD POLICY REFERENCE:
EL-2 Treatment of Clients
EL-3 Treatment of Staff
EL-7 Corporate Risk

POLICY:
Southern Health-Santé Sud is committed to providing quality compassionate care to the communities or people it serves. Ethical principles and values are incorporated into the way that decisions are made and how care is delivered every day.

The Ethical Decision Making Tool is to be applied when clinical and/or organizational dilemmas arise to address what we should do and why.

- Common ethical issues may include situations when:
- Client goals conflict with the health care team goals.
 - Family goals conflict with the health care team goals.
 - Staff member goals conflict with the physician's goals.
 - Co-workers' actions conflict with your beliefs.
 - Competing demands for human, financial, and/or physical resources.

Each site or program conducts guided learning about the framework and how to use it. A laminated copy of the Ethical Decision Making Framework is posted in a location where staff and physicians can readily visualize it (e.g. nursing station, information board, etc.).

Each site/program designates a data entry person to enter the Record of Ethical Decision Making Discussion forms into the database. The forms will be filed in a centralized location on site.

When staff see patients, families or legal representatives are experiencing a dilemma they may also want to provide these individuals with the Ottawa Personal Decision Guide form. This form can help people identify their decision making needs, plan the next steps, track their progress, and share their views about a decision.

DEFINITIONS:

Ethics: the application of a rational process for determining the most morally desirable course of action when making a decision. It is a system of value behaviours and beliefs that govern proper conduct and reflective practice.

"Ethics is basically about the way human beings treat each other and the natural environment; it is the systematic examination of the attitudes and behaviours of people. For our purposes, ethics can be broken down into two parts: it is about carefully studying the values that actually do guide our attitudes and behaviours in given-contexts; and it is about exploring what values ought to guide our attitudes and behaviours." (Jiwani, 2001).

PROCEDURE:

1. Each director/manager conducts guided learning about the framework and how to use it.
2. Each director/manager/designate posts a laminated copy of the Ethical Decision Making Framework in a location where staff and physicians can readily visualize it (e.g. nursing station, information board, etc.).
3. Use the Ethics Resource Algorithm ORG.1810.PL.005.SD.01 to determine with whom the dilemma should be reviewed.
4. If it is determined to be an ethical dilemma, use the Ethical Decision Making Framework and Worksheet ORG.1810.PL.005.FORM.01 to discuss the ethical dilemma and determine the most appropriate course of action. If it is determined to be a human resource, risk, or legal matter, refer to the appropriate department.
5. Follow the appropriate pathway of the Ethics Resource Algorithm ORG.1810.PL.005.SD.01.
6. Complete the Record of Ethical Decision Making Discussion form ORG.1810.PL.005.FORM.02 and forward to your site/program data entry person. The data entry person enters the information into the database and files the form in a centralized location on site.
7. The Regional Ethics Committee reviews the data entered into the Record of Ethical Decision Making Discussions on a bi-annual basis (May and November) and shares a summary with the Regional Leadership Team.

FOR PATIENTS, FAMILIES AND/OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES EXPERIENCING A DILEMMA:

1. Provide patients, families or legal representatives who are experiencing a dilemma with the Ottawa Personal Decision Guide Form ORG.1810.PL.005.FORM.03 or the Ottawa Personal Decision Guide Form for Two ORG.1810.PL.005.FORM.04 if two people are completing the form.
2. Review the Ottawa Personal Decision Guide form with patients, families and/or legal representatives to outline the purpose of the guide and how to complete it. The form is for their personal use.
3. Offer these individuals and opportunity to share their views about a decision.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

[ORG.1810.PL.005.FORM.01](#) Ethical Decision Making Framework and Worksheet

[ORG.1810.PL.005.FORM.02](#) Record of Ethical Decision Making Discussion Form

[ORG.1810.PL.005.FORM.03](#) Ottawa Personal Decision Guide Form

[ORG.1810.PL.005.FORM.04](#) Ottawa Personal Decision Guide Form for Two

[ORG.1810.PL.005.SD.01](#) Ethics Resource Algorithm

[ORG.1810.PL.005.SD.02](#) Ethical Decision Making Resource Guide

[ORG.1810.PL.005.SD.03](#) Ethical Decision Making Framework Poster

REFERENCES:

Jiwani, Bashir (2001). *An introduction to health ethics committees: a professional guide for the development of ethics resources*. Alberta, Canada.

Trillium Health Partners' Ethics Process (2015). Ontario, Canada.

Toronto Central Community Care Access Centre (2008). *Community Ethics Toolkit*. Ontario, Canada.