Excellence in Ethics

Fr Kevin McGovern,
Caroline Chisholm Centre for Health Ethics:
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Why ethics? Why now?

- From religious sisters to lay leadership
- Development of Mission infrastructure
- Research ethics
- Clinical ethics in Australia
- Clinical ethics in the United States
- Succession planning
Clinical ethics in USA

- US Veterans Health Administration
  - *IntegratedEthics*

- **American Society for Bioethics & Humanities**

- **Catholic Health Association of the United States of America (CHAUSA)**
Striving for Excellence in Ethics

- website with resources and tools
- booklet (54 pages)
  - components of a robust ethics service
  - standards for each of these components
  - tool for assessing performance
    - strengths
    - gaps
    - opportunities for improvement
Components of a robust ethics service

1. Ethics expertise
2. Ethics committees
3. Consultation and advisement
4. Education and formation
5. Policy review and development
6. Community outreach
7. Institutional integration
8. Leadership support
Standards

1. **Ethics expertise**
   - “designated individual within the organization with expertise in ethics or, at minimum, easy access to someone outside the organization with expertise in ethics”
   - mentoring for the individual with ethics expertise if s/he is
     - new to health care
     - new to Catholic health care
     - new to the role
Standards (cont’d)

2. Ethics committees
   i. Structure
e.g. clear statements about the committee’s functions, membership, meetings, etc
   ii. Competencies
e.g. core curriculum
   iii. Procedures
e.g. annual needs assessment and goal setting
Standards (cont’d)

3. Consultation and advisement
   i. Advisement
   ii. Prospective consultation
   iii. Retrospective case analysis
   iv. Proactive or preventive ethics
      • clear statements about access, procedure, information management, membership, competencies, ongoing education, evaluation, quality improvement, and so on
Standards (cont’d)

4. Education and formation
   i. Infrastructure
      e.g. identifies audiences, develops program(s), integrates ethics education into existing programs
   ii. Resources
      including financial resources, time, space and equipment
   iii. Integration
      e.g. ethics education is included in orientation, and linked to KPIs and performance goals
Standards (cont’d)

5. Policy review and development
   - develops and reviews policies & processes
     - key ethics areas in clinical practice (e.g. informed consent, Not for CPR or Allow Natural Death, conscientious objection, care at the beginning of life, care at the end of life, etc)
     - key ethics areas in corporate culture (e.g. care of the poor, community benefit, human resources, OH&S, wages and promotions, etc)
Standards (cont’d)

6. **Community outreach**
   
   i. Catholic Church (e.g. regular meetings with local bishop or his representative, parish education initiatives)
   
   ii. Government - State, Federal & local (e.g. services for disadvantaged populations, public health)
   
   iii. Education Institutions (e.g. joint teaching arrangements, academic conferences, internships and externships)
Standards (cont’d)

7. Institutional integration

= ethics is “a vital and valued presence within the health ministry”

i. Ethics personnel have an active presence or connections with key committees

ii. There are established processes for evaluating and assessing systemic ethics integration
Standards (cont’d)

8. Leadership support
   i. Leadership demonstrates that ethics is a priority
   ii. Leadership models ethical decision-making
   iii. Leadership encourages staff participation in ethics activities, makes resources available, and holds the ethics program accountable
   iv. There is an ethics champion within leadership
Lucy: Aren't the clouds beautiful? They look like big balls of cotton. I could just lie here all day and watch them drift by. If you use your imagination, you can see lots of things in the cloud's formations. What do you think you see, Linus?

Linus: Well, those clouds up there look to me look like the map of the British Honduras in the Caribbean. That cloud up there looks a little like the profile of Thomas Eakins, the famous painter and sculptor. And that group of clouds over there gives me the impression of the Stoning of Stephen. I can see the Apostle Paul standing there to one side.

Lucy: Uh huh. That's very good. What do you see in the clouds, Charlie Brown?

Charlie Brown: Well... I was going to say I saw a duckie and a horsie, but I changed my mind.
Take the next step!

G K Chesterton:
“If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly.”

Start from where you are
Take the next step!
Don’t forget the Assessment Tool