

Ethics Framework

A Guide for PSFDH Staff, Physicians, Volunteers,
Patients and Families

April 2017



Introduction

Building a Culture of Ethics

Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital (PSFDH) takes its commitment to promoting an ethical culture seriously. Building the organization's ethics capacity, providing support to those making decisions and facing challenging ethics issues and also to ensure that the delivery of health care services meet the highest ethical standard.

A variety of resources are available to assist patients and families as well as PSFDH staff, physicians and volunteers that with assist in addressing ethics questions. The ultimate goal is to embed ethics reflection and action into all aspects of health care and decision making processes across the organization.

Our Values

Our values define what we believe in and what we stand for as an organization. They provide us with a common understanding of our priorities and serve as a framework for our actions.

Six Ways

Our values describe "6 ways" we can personally demonstrate our commitment to patient care in our daily interactions with patients, their families and our colleagues. PSFDH staff, physicians and volunteers are expected to implement our values in our everyday work values, actions and decisions. Doing so consistently, enables us to build a stronger ethical climate.

Values in Action

Our values include the following:

1. An environment where everyone is treated with dignity, respect and compassion.
2. Promotion of positive working environments and relationships.
3. Commitment to excellence in the provision of safe, high quality, patient-focussed care.
4. Collaboration to facilitate access in collaboration with our health care partners to appropriate care in response to patient need.
5. Accountability to our stakeholders to ensure responsible stewardship of our resources.
6. Commitment to the recruitment and retention of staff who are dedicated to the organization's Mission, Vision, and Values.

Patient and Family Centered Care

Patient and Family Advisory Council members are appointed "Advisors" that assist in identifying current and future opportunities to improve the care experience for patients, family and caregivers. They ensure the perspective of patients, family members or their caregivers is always considered and incorporated in organizational activities and listen and learn from patients and family members. Patient and family advisors are also part of the Ethics Committee.

Ethics & Compliance

Living our Values

The Ethics Committee promotes and maintains a values- and ethics-based culture, consistent with the following PSFDH policies and procedures:

Ethics Clinical Consultation – An ethics consultation may be requested by a patient, staff, physician, volunteer, patient’s next of kin, any family member or the Board of Directors. Procedures can be requested for both urgent and non-urgent consultations.

Code of Conduct & Whistleblower Policy – A standard of conduct committed to promoting, preserving and enhancing public confidence in the integrity, objectivity and impartiality of PSFDH's clinical and business activities. These activities include compassionate care, trustworthiness and fairness, integrity, respect and dignity, collaboration, cooperation and teamwork, transparency and accountability and quality improvement.

Research, Education, Quality Improvements or Evaluation - Research activities at the hospital will conform to the PSFDH's Mission, Vision and Values statements, as well as its policies and procedures. All research related activity involving patients, caregivers or staff at PSFDH must be reviewed by the Ethics Committee and the Medical Quality Assurance Committee (MQA) if appropriate and approved by the Senior Leadership Team and the Medical Advisory Committee.

Guidance

Anyone can contact the Ethics Committee with questions and concerns or to ask for assistance; including a patient, staff, physician, volunteer, patient’s next of kin, any family member or the Board of Directors.

PSFDH staff with an ethics concern or inquiry are encouraged to consult with his/her manager or others such as:

- Resource team leader
- Human resources contact,
- Union representative, or
- Professional regulatory body.

If the matter is still not clear and a staff person believes there may be an ethical dilemma, the individual or his/her manager may contact the Ethics Committee via completion of an Ethics Committee Consultation Request form located in PDMS. For patients and families, please contact the Privacy Officer by phone 613-283-2330 ext.1140 or by email at privacyofficer@psfdh.on.ca

Clinical Ethics

Clinical ethical issues involving clinical crisis management may include, but are not limited to, patient's prior capable wishes or advance directives, matters dealing with the delivery or withholding of life-sustaining treatments, consent, organ transplantation, nutrition, pain management, ethnic and/or religious preferences and beliefs.

Facing Difficult Choices

Health care is complex and sometimes requires us to make difficult decisions where there are no clear answers. Patients and families can be faced with difficult choices during the course of their treatment and healthcare professionals can be challenged with situations that cause moral distress or uncertainty in the course of patient care. The PSFDH Clinical Ethics Committee is available for support to work through questions such as:

1. "What's the right thing to do?"
 2. "How should this decision be made?"
 3. "Is this a reasonable compromise?"
-

A Supportive Hand

The Clinical Ethics Committee exists to assist **patients, staff, families, clinicians, administrators, volunteers and policy-makers** in identifying, examining and resolving a wide range of ethical challenges that arise in health care.

Consultations can be simple conversations, guided discussions with teams, assistance with decision-making, or shared analysis of complex situations and ethical issues.

The Clinical Ethics Committee **does not make decisions** or replace the appropriate decision-makers. Upon request, it may make recommendations or facilitate balanced, objective discussion of the ethical issues with those involved.

Questions

Some potential clinical ethics issues include:

- Can a patient and family demand continued medical care that is different from the healthcare team/physician recommendations?
- What if substitute decision-makers make decisions not based on the patient's wishes?
- Should physicians share information about reproductive choices of an adolescent with parents?
- When should we follow the prior wishes of patients with mental illness & suicidal ideation?
- Do my personal beliefs and values conflict with Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID)?

Do You Have an Ethics Question?

- ▶ Are you wondering “What is the right thing to do?”
- ▶ Are the differences expressed in value words such as “fairness” or “respect”?
- ▶ Do multiple options seem right or seem wrong?
- ▶ Are you concerned about how to protect others from harm?

CHOOSE THE AREA OF CONCERN

Patient Care

Code of Conduct

Research,
Education, Quality
Improvement or
Evaluation

REVIEW OF CORPORATE AND DEPARTMENTAL CLINICAL POLICY

YES

Request Ethical
Consult

NO

Resolution
Obtained

PSFDH Ethics Framework

Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital supports you in making good ethical decisions. For more information contact the Ethics Committee or contact the Privacy Officer at 613-283-2330 ext. 1140.

Organizational Ethics

Ethics has broad application to values, hospital policy and decision-making. Organizational issues involve non-clinical challenges such as complying with legislation, stewardship, financial matters, honesty, integrity in reporting to funders and the public, and resource allocation.

Facing Difficult Choices

Health care is complex and sometimes requires us to make difficult decisions where there are no clear answers. Healthcare professionals and others can be challenged with situations that cause ethical conflict or uncertainty in the workplace. The PSFDH Clinical Ethics Committee is available for support to work through questions such as:

1. "What's the right thing to do?"
 2. "How should this decision be made?"
 3. "Is this a reasonable compromise?"
-

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Questions

Some potential organizational ethics issues can involve:

- Values,
- Hospital policies and practices,
- Decision-making,
- Complying with legislation,
- Stewardship,
- Financial matters.

Organizational Ethics Decision-Making Process

Making Good Decisions

While making ethical decisions can be a complex process not easily defined by an algorithm, identifying steps to take when faced with such an issue can help. Below is a decision-making process that can assist in ensuring that appropriate questions are being asked and steps taken, to address an ethics issue.



Research Ethics

Research

Research is investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge or information that has wide applicability.

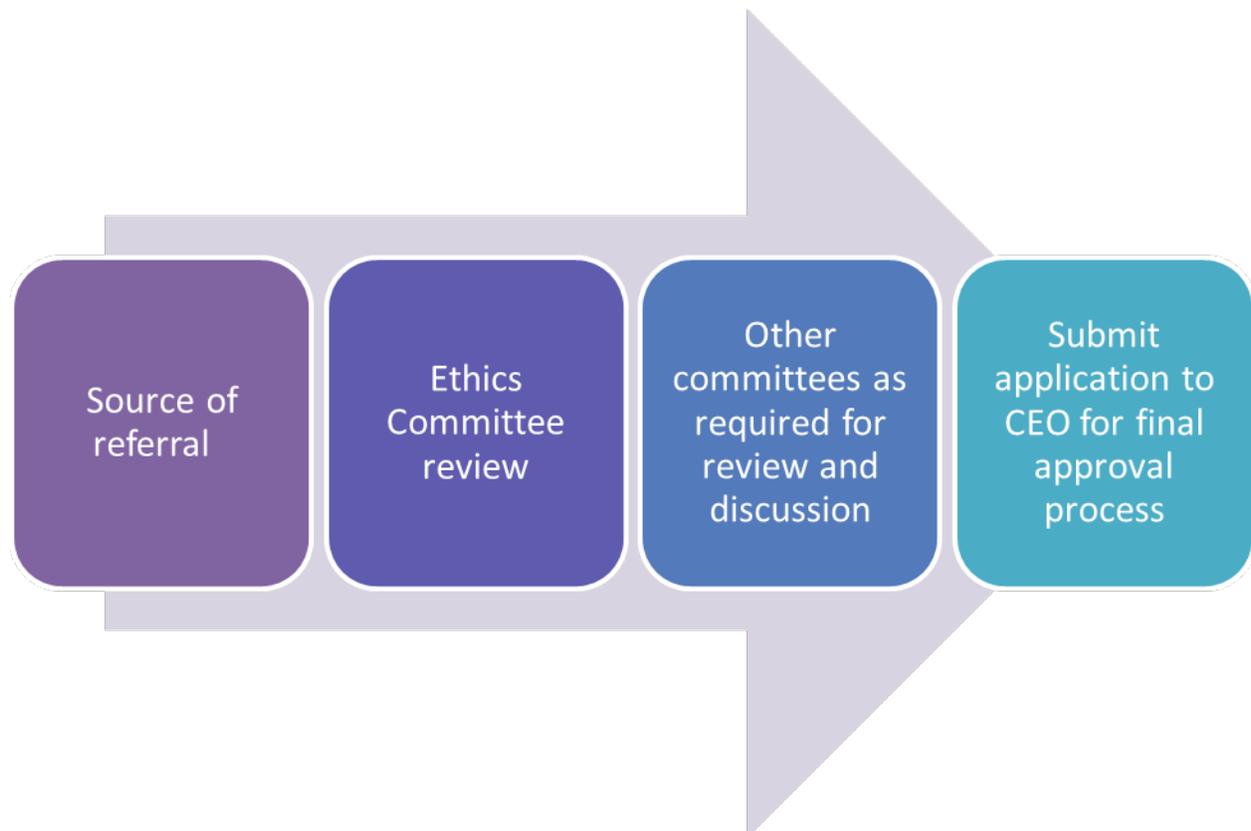
Maintaining the Highest Ethical Standards

With the current emphasis on evidence-based practices in health care, various initiatives to generate knowledge are not only encouraged, but also necessary to provide quality care for patients.

Regardless of the nature of the knowledge-generating project, it is important practice to review such initiatives to ensure that the well-being of participants or patients is protected and that the highest ethical standards are maintained.

Research Ethics Review

The PSFDH is committed to excellence in the provision of high quality patient-focused care. Through the hospital's extensive programs and services, we continue to expand upon the health care services provided. As such, a formalized corporate policy with regard to research, as it applies to the patients and health care team members of the PSFDH, is a necessity.



Quality Improvement & Evaluation Ethics

Quality Improvement and Evaluation

Quality improvement initiatives are on-going processes designed to improve performance within a particular institution and setting.

Evaluations are initiatives that aim to measure the success of a program or practice to inform decisions, identify improvements or promote accountability.

Promoting Safety and Preventing Harm

Risk and harm are not exclusive to research. There may be some elements of risk embedded within quality improvement and evaluation strategies. While the potential to cause harm may be unintentional, risk can occur in poor design and planning, violation of confidentiality, lack of informed consent and lack of consideration for the burden generated by this work.

All investigators and managers who undertake quality improvement or evaluation projects should consider the ethical implications of their projects.

Feedback

The Ethics Framework is a living document that will be enhanced and refined over time. We appreciate feedback and suggestions, which can be sent to the Ethics Committee through the Policy Document Management System (PDMS).

For more information, contact the Privacy Officer by phone 613-283-2330 ext.1140 or by email at privacyofficer@psfdh.on.ca