



6th International Conference on Clinical Ethics Consultation

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www.ethics2010.org



Abstract Submission Form – Papers

Please contact John Tuohey at ethics@providence.org with any questions.

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Proposed title of paper: Ethics Consultant 's role in implementing the Washington Death with Dignity Act at a public medical center

Abstract with 3 clearly stated objectives in 250 words:

- 1) Describe ethics consultants' involvement in implementation of Washington's Death with Dignity Act (DwDA) at a public teaching hospital.
- 2) Discuss dilemmas faced by the ethics consultant.
- 3) Describe the evolution of our DwDA policies.

This paper will highlight the ethics consultant's role in our medical center's compliance with the newly enacted DwDA. I will discuss the following issues.

First, uncertain whether private hospitals and clinics would opt in, we considered whether we have a stronger obligation to opt in because we are an urban public institution.

Second , what are the best policies and procedures to balance interests of opt-in and opt-out providers? I will discuss the team approach we use and the role and activities of the team's ethics consultant.

Third, how should I negotiate my personal and professional points of view? What are the harms and benefits of revealing my personal opinion about the Act?

Fourth, for diseases with fewer providers, if some physicians opt out it may effectively mean we have "no willing providers". The organization's obligation to inform patients of this conflicts with our obligation to respect provider confidentiality. As a member of the organization's DwDA team, is it coercive or inappropriate to facilitate meetings where physicians reveal their willingness to participate?

Fifth, staff from death with dignity advocacy groups contacted members of our academic department seeking explanation of our hospital's handling of requests. We devised an approach to handle such inquiries.

NOTE: First, I will scrupulously protect confidentiality in this presentation. Many specifics CAN be revealed but details will be removed or changed in describing anything that could be traced back to individuals. Second, I would be happy to present this as a major paper, panel presentation, etc. However, I will NOT be able to present it as a poster.

If you have or will publish on this topic, please cite reference:
plan future publication, journal TBD

Are you planning to or will you be willing to submit a poster along with your paper?

Yes No