|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  |

Unity Health's Ethics Consultation Service offers aid to patients, staff and parties interested in a patient's care to help resolve dilemmas or conflicts when trying to make decisions when a "right" path is not clear.

**To initiate a consultation:**   
Call the Ethics Hotline at 585-368-4880 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If the call is after normal business hours, you will receive additional instructions on the voice message.

Be prepared to provide the patient's name, date of birth, floor or service, attending physician, and the ethical question(s) that you are hoping to resolve.

**Who can request an ethics consultation?**An ethics consult may be requested by any patient, significant other, family member, and/or by any staff member who perceives an ethical issue emerging around the care of a patient. If the requestor is not the attending physician, the attending will be notified of the request and he/ she will be invited to participate.

**When should an ethics consultation be considered?**   
An ethics consultation should be considered whenever a dilemma or conflict emerges around decisions in the management of patient care. Often in the practice of medicine the "right" decision is not entirely clear. When in doubt, we recommend that teams err on the side of consultation to encourage open dialogue and facilitate decision making. Ethics consultations often help resolve difficult choices and actual or potential conflicts between parties struggling to make objective and fair decisions that are consistent with the patient's best interests, beliefs and wishes.

**Who conducts the ethics consultation?**   
The Ethics consultation facilitator will assemble a team from the membership of the Ethics committee to conduct the consultation. On occasions, other individuals deemed to have expertise in an area relevant to the consultation may be asked to participate. Patients and their families can also be included.

**What feedback can I expect from an ethics consult?**   
The Ethics consultation facilitator will provide an oral report of findings and recommendations and provide opportunity for discussion. A note summarizing the key points of the consultation may be placed in the medical record when deemed appropriate or when requested.

The consultation findings and recommendations are reviewed at the next Ethics Committee Meeting and any additional recommendations that emerge from the committee discussion will be made available to the attending and when appropriate, other parties involved in the consultation request.