Information for Patients and Families Making Difficult Decisions

Do you have to make a difficult health care decision?
Are you unsure about the right thing to do?

The Clinical Ethics Service can help you, as a patient or family member, if you are faced with a difficult decision or an ethical question.

When would you need ethics?
When you have to make a difficult or confusing healthcare decision and there are different opinions about what is the best thing to do.

Examples of ethical concerns are:
• Uncertainty or confusion about what treatment option is best for you/your child
• Questions about your child/adolescent’s role in making health care decisions for themselves
• Questions about continuing or stopping [withdrawing] treatment
• Questions about refusing treatment
• Any issue concerning patient’s rights
• When there are different opinions among family members or between family members and others about treatment goals or the plan of care
• End of life decision-making

How can an ethics consultation help you?
• We can meet with you and discuss options
• We help you explore which of your own values and beliefs are involved in the decision
• We help you to decide what is most important to you, your child and your family
• We do not make decisions for you
• If there are different views about a plan of care, we can help by providing the opportunity for a discussion that is safe, respectful and fair

What do we offer?
• Confidential discussions for patients, families and health care providers

How to contact us:
Main contact for BC Children’s Hospital, Sunny Hill Centre for Children and BC Women’s Hospital & Health Centre
Dr. Lori d’Agincourt-Canning
ldagincourt@cw.bc.ca
604-875-2345 ext. 3182

Ethics Resource Office
cw_ethics@cw.bc.ca

Developed by the health care professionals of the Clinical Ethics Services with assistance from the Department of Learning & Development.

CW127A © 2010 BC Children’s Hospital