

PERTH AND SMITHS FALLS DISTRICT HOSPITAL

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

TITLE: Ethics Framework, Policy and Procedure

CREATION DATE: September 30, 2004

APPROVED BY: Senior Leadership Council

Policy:

It is the policy of PSFDH to follow a consistent process in dealing with all ethical issues. Ethical issues in a healthcare facility include more than consultation and clinical crisis management. It also involves fundamental values, policy review and on-going education for staff, board of directors/volunteers, managers, patients and families and the Senior Leadership Team.

Ethics has broad application to values, hospital policies and practices, decision-making, complying with legislation, stewardship, financial matters, honesty, integrity in reporting to funders and the public, and resource allocation. 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 to care, organ transplantation, nutrition, pain management, and ethnic and/or religious preferences and beliefs.

Patients, family members, substitute decision makers (SDMs), administrators and healthcare professionals may encounter difficult ethical dilemmas. When this occurs, consultation from the Ethics Committee may be requested.

The Ethics Committee (see terms of reference) will provide consultation, recommendations and education when required, as it is not a decision-making body. The Ethics Committee will strive to provide clarification of the issues and principles that should be considered and information about the relevant governance and hospital policies and opinions that relate to each case. Patient care decision-making ultimately remains with the primary physician and the patient (or where applicable, the SDM).

Framework:

The Perth & Smiths Falls District Hospital is committed to maintaining an environment where everyone is treated with dignity, respect and compassion.

The Perth & Smiths Falls District Hospital's Framework for Ethical Decision-Making is a multi-step process which facilitates a systematic and thorough examination of a situation. It encourages the incorporation of new or additional information as it is introduced to the review.

Last Reviewed Date: 04-02-2022 00:00:00	Next Review Date: 04-02-2025 00:00:00
Distribution Groups: none	Signing Authority: VP of Clinical Services
Disclaimer Message: Any printed version of this document is only accurate up to the date of printing. Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital (PSFDH) cannot guarantee the currency or accuracy of any printed policy. Always refer to the Policies and Procedures site / PDMS for the most current version of document in effect. PSFDH accepts no responsibility for the use of this material by any person or organization not associated with PSFDH. No part of this document may be reproduced in any form for publication without permission of PSFDH.	
Date/Time Generated: Jul 04, 2025 11:20	Generated By:

Step 1: Clarify the Key Question

- Identify the central issue needing to be addressed

Step 2: Identify facts & stakeholders

- Collect relevant facts and identify what you need but don't have
- If it is a clinical issue, collect information about the medical diagnosis or prognosis, quality of life described in patient's terms, patient's preferences and contextual features
- Are there any organizational policies or guidelines addressing the question?
- What guidance do relevant laws give?
- Which individuals are relevant to this issue and who should be part of the discussion and decision?

Step 3: Identify values and prioritize

- What are the key values?
- What is the central conflict in values?
- How do you prioritize these values against each other?
- What do you think is most important and why?

Step 4: Identify Options

- Identify all potential courses of action, even ones that don't immediately appear suitable

Step 5: Make a decision & evaluate

- Assess each option against the values that you determined to be of priority in the step above
- Make a decision consistent with identified key values
- Once the decision is made, follow up and evaluate so you can learn from this for next time

In order to determine if you have an ethical question or conflict, please review the following steps:

Procedure for Requesting a Non-Urgent Ethics Committee Consultation:

1. An ethics consultation may be requested by:
 - a patient/family;
 - a patient's physician;
 - a patient's SDM or Power of Attorney (POA) for Personal Care (if the patient has been deemed incapable of decision making);
 - any member of staff;
 - any credentialed physician;
 - any board of directors/volunteer
 - any medical learner/student

Last Reviewed Date: 04-02-2022 00:00:00

Next Review Date: 04-02-2025 00:00:00

Distribution Groups: none

Signing Authority: VP of Clinical Services

Disclaimer Message: Any printed version of this document is only accurate up to the date of printing. Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital (PSFDH) cannot guarantee the currency or accuracy of any printed policy. Always refer to the Policies and Procedures site / PDMS for the most current version of document in effect. PSFDH accepts no responsibility for the use of this material by any person or organization not associated with PSFDH. No part of this document may be reproduced in any form for publication without permission of PSFDH.

Date/Time Generated: Jul 04, 2025 11:20

Generated By:

2. Requests for an ethics consultation should be referred to the appropriate manager or Patient Care Manager on call, who will contact the CEO or delegate and advise them of the request.
3. Although their approval is not required, the patient's primary physician, family and/or surrogate/SDM/POA for Personal Care will also be notified of the request for and process of an ethics consultation.
4. If consultation with an Ethicist is required, the Ethics committee will provide contact information to the physician directly or will make direct contact with the:
Ethicist, Chief of Staff at Kingston Health Sciences Centre - 1-613-549-6666
5. If the issue requires the consultation of the Ethics Committee, the CEO or delegate will notify the Chair who may call a meeting or place the issue on the next agenda. Representatives from any relevant internal and/or external healthcare discipline may be asked to participate in an ad hoc role.
6. When an Ethics Committee consultation requires discussion of confidential material, the committee members must treat this information with the utmost privacy and security.
7. The Ethics Committee will meet as required to discuss the ethical issue and will report on their findings to the CEO or delegate.
8. The patient, family, Power of Attorney for Personal Care, board member/volunteer, medical learner/student, staff and/or physician will be given appropriate information to make an informed decision.

Procedure for Requesting an Urgent Ethics Consultation:

1. An urgent ethics consultation may be requested by:
 - a patient/family;
 - a patient's physician;
 - a patient's SDM and/or POA for Personal Care (if the patient has been deemed incapable of decision making)
 - any member of staff;
 - any credentialed physician;
 - any board of director/volunteer
 - any medical learner/student

Last Reviewed Date: 04-02-2022 00:00:00

Next Review Date: 04-02-2025 00:00:00

Distribution Groups: none

Signing Authority: VP of Clinical Services

Disclaimer Message: Any printed version of this document is only accurate up to the date of printing. Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital (PSFDH) cannot guarantee the currency or accuracy of any printed policy. Always refer to the Policies and Procedures site / PDMS for the most current version of document in effect. PSFDH accepts no responsibility for the use of this material by any person or organization not associated with PSFDH. No part of this document may be reproduced in any form for publication without permission of PSFDH.

Date/Time Generated: Jul 04, 2025 11:20

Generated By:

2. After hours or on weekends, the ethics consultation process will be managed by the Patient Care Manager on call in consultation with the Senior Leadership on call and the Chief of Staff or delegate, if appropriate. Other staff will be called in or consulted as necessitated by the situation.
3. The committee will give the best possible information to the patient, family, SDM, POA for Personal Care, volunteer, medical learner/student and/or staff to help inform and guide the decision making process.

An Ethics Trends Table is updated on a quarterly basis to identify emerging themes and areas for quality improvement. Recommendations (written or verbal) from Ethics referrals are provided to the source of the Ethics referral and are documented appropriately.

References:

1. Alberta Health Services (2019) Ethics Framework: A guide for AHS Staff, Physicians and Volunteers
2. Canadian Nurses Association (2017) Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses
3. Framework for Ethical Decision-Making Multi-Step Process by Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare

Revision History:

March 19, 2020

April 2, 2022

Last Reviewed Date: 04-02-2022 00:00:00	Next Review Date: 04-02-2025 00:00:00
Distribution Groups: none	Signing Authority: VP of Clinical Services
Disclaimer Message: Any printed version of this document is only accurate up to the date of printing. Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital (PSFDH) cannot guarantee the currency or accuracy of any printed policy. Always refer to the Policies and Procedures site / PDMS for the most current version of document in effect. PSFDH accepts no responsibility for the use of this material by any person or organization not associated with PSFDH. No part of this document may be reproduced in any form for publication without permission of PSFDH.	
Date/Time Generated: Jul 04, 2025 11:20	Generated By: