



VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION OF CHITTENDEN AND GRAND ISLE COUNTIES

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RESOLUTION OF ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Policy # 14.8

SCOPE: All Agency

PURPOSE:

POLICY: The Agency strives to provide support for resolution of ethical dilemmas that arise in the course of patient care. Some of the factors that contribute to these situations include the following¹:

1. The intimate nature of providing patient care often involves life and death and quality of life situations.
2. There is a constant flux of societal and legal implications related to issues such as abortion, living wills, withdrawal of life support, etc.
3. Health care workers have a right to maintain their own personal values and will not be forced to carry out decisions that run contrary to these personal views.
4. Health care workers have a responsibility to act as advocates for patient wishes relative to health and lifestyle.
5. Health care workers have a responsibility to work collaboratively and responsibly to protect the rights of the Agency.

Examples of ethical questions in home care that commonly arise are:

- Decisions related to the equitable distribution of scarce staffing resources
- Defining appropriate steps to take when the client has become unsafe at home.
- Decisions to provide care or to discontinue care if staff feel that the ordered plan of care is inappropriate to meet client needs or that the required health care cannot be safely provided in the home setting
- The decision to discharge a family or maintain service when parents are not participating in the learning process, and the child's safety is in question.

Staff has access to the following support systems:

1. Consultation with their clinical supervisor. If not resolved,
2. Consultation with a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. If not resolved,
3. Consultation with a multidisciplinary/cross program team². If not resolved,
4. Consultation with ethicist at Fletcher Allen Health Care

Supervisors and staff will be provided education in orientation regarding the process for resolving ethical questions. In addition, all supervisors will receive training in the philosophy and basic skill of resolving ethical questions.

¹ Marker Systems, Inc. Administrative Structure Standards 1995 Severna Park, MD

² Consultation teams include: Interdisciplinary Team Meetings, Hospice Interdisciplinary Team Meetings, FCS Interdisciplinary Team Meetings; Professional Advisory Committee, Community Medicaid Waiver Team, and Quality Assurance/Risk Management dept.



Procedure for Resolving Clinical Ethical Conflicts

