

Who are we?

Upstate Ethics Consultants come from a variety of disciplinary back-grounds including medicine, law, and philosophy. We are guided by the ethics consultation standards of the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities. All consults are reviewed by the Consult Service Director and in monthly peer-review meetings for quality assurance.

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To reach the consultant on call,
call the Hospital Operator
University Hospital 315.464.5540



For more info...

The Upstate Ethics Consultation Service is a program of the Center for Bioethics and Humanities, a department of SUNY Upstate's medical school. In addition to ethics consultation, Center faculty provide education in bioethics and medical humanities for students and clinicians, conduct research and publish scholarly work, advise on health care policy, and publish a literary journal, *The Healing Muse*.

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Center for Bioethics and Humanities

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Ethics Consults

University Hospital
Downtown & Community Campuses



Helping you think through choices

Ethics consultation helps those who must make an ethical decision think through their options and the possible consequences of their choices. Consultants provide information, education, and an outside perspective about ethical considerations related to a health care situation or decision. We participate in team meetings with patients and families when requested, to help everyone involved to better understand ethical issues, make recommendations, and help people reach consensus on the best course of action.

Quick Facts, Ethics Consults

What does an ethics consult involve?

A member of the Ethics Consultation Service will review the case and discuss the issues with a concerned patient, family, and/or staff. Often a sit-down meeting or conference call between the relevant parties is arranged. A written note is left in the patient's chart or letter mailed to the person requesting input.

Who can request a consult?

Anyone directly involved in the issue – nurses, attendings, house staff, medical students, social workers, patients, and family members. We encourage a staff person requesting a consult to first speak with the attending, when appropriate, but the attending's permission is not necessary for a consult.



What types of issues are appropriate for an ethics consult?

We assist when people have concerns about differing values or goals of treatment, when clinicians have questions about their ethical or professional responsibilities, or when there is concern that policy or law prevents people from doing the right thing. If you're not sure whether you need an ethics consult, call and talk with us: we'll let you know whether we can help. Many consults deal with these sorts of issues:

- who should make the final decision about what is the best treatment choice
- starting or stopping life support
- a Do-Not-Resuscitate order (DNR)
- refusing treatment
- Living Wills and Health Care Proxies
- patient confidentiality

How do I request a consult?

Patients and family requests a consult by contacting a doctor, nurse or social worker, or by calling the hospital operator (315.464.5540). Hospital staff should call the operator. We provide input within 24 hours and if necessary, sooner.

What hours are you available?

7 days a week, 8 am – 5 pm.

Is this only for inpatients?

No. We also provide ethics consults for University Hospital's outpatient clinics.

Does the Ethics Consultant decide what happens?

No, we do not decide for you or direct medical care. A consult can, however, help those involved to better understand ethical issues and questions and to reach consensus on the best course of action. We may provide you with policies or articles that shed light on the situation. We often help people think through consequences of the possible choices.