



What is the Bioethics Committee?

The Bioethics Committee is a group of medical, nursing and other patient services staff, administration, the Board of Trustees, clergy and community members.

Why do we need a Bioethics Committee?

Healthcare issues can be confusing and difficult. While advances in medical technology often save lives they can also raise ethical questions.

Wentworth-Douglass Hospital developed this approach several years ago to address these concerns.

General guidelines for calling a Bioethics consult

Consider calling the Bioethics Committee to help resolve questions or conflicts between the following:

- Patients and caregivers
- Families and caregivers
- Nursing staff and physicians
- Patients and families
- Individual patients



Wentworth-Douglass Hospital's Bioethics Committee offers resources to help resolve issues for patients, family and staff.



Wentworth-Douglass Hospital

THE SEACOAST'S LEADING MEDICAL CENTER

Ethical Issues: Do you have questions or concerns about the following choices?

Advanced Medical Technologies -

Decisions regarding genetic screening, use of feeding tubes, respirators, dialysis machines and other technologies are often difficult.

Beginning of Life Issues - Adoption, surrogacy and choices in reproductive technologies may cause dilemmas.

Questions may also be raised about reproductive health issues, attachment, bonding and parental fitness.

End of Life Care - Patients and families may be concerned about pre-existing Advance Directives: Living Will and Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare, a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order, palliative care or hospice care.

Organ transplants - Questions may arise about who may receive organs or who may donate them.

Caregiver/Relationship Issues -

Questions and concerns may arise about coverage limits imposed by insurance and managed care, who will care for patients after discharge, issues among family members, informed consent or issues about confidentiality and privacy and decision making.

The Bioethics Committee *does...*

Work with the medical staff, hospital employees, patients and family members to provide a forum to discuss cases among medical and hospital personnel.

Respect and maintain confidentiality.

Support educational activities on bioethical issues - a community forum is named after Dr. Jesse Galt, Founder of the WDH Bioethics Committee.

Provide a forum to address ethical conflicts.

Act as a team with varied backgrounds, skills and perspectives.

The Bioethics Committee *does not...*

Give answers or provide medical advice.

Act as a team of ethical experts.

Who can request a Bioethics Committee meeting?

A patient, family member, friend, doctor, hospital staff member, clergy or community healthcare provider can initiate the request.

Upon notification, the chairperson will assess the need to convene the Bioethics Committee. When appropriate, the committee will meet within 24-48 hours of the request.

How can you contact the Bioethics Committee?

Call the hospital's main number, 603-742-5252, and ask to speak to someone about the Bioethics Committee. Not all issues may need to go to the Bioethics Committee - other hospital resources include Social Work Services, the Patient Advocate and Chaplain.

**We Can Help!
Call 603-742-5252 and ask
to speak to someone about
the Bioethics Committee.**