



# The Ethics Consultation process: What you need to know...



Ethics consultation provides a facilitated forum for thoughtful exploration of how to act well and make morally sound choices based on beliefs and values about life, health, suffering and death. Through the ethical, legal and expert resources of the Provincial Health Ethics Network of NL, the service provides an opportunity for thoughtful discussion and review of the ethical dimensions of each case.

## **How can the Ethics Committee help in ethics consultation?**

The Ethics consultation service is available to clients, their families and health care professionals, to help them identify, understand and resolve difficult healthcare ethics questions.

The service is a consultative and advisory body and does not make decisions regarding client care or the organization's policies.

## **Who can refer for a consultation?**

The consultation service will accept referrals from physicians, staff, volunteers and clients where an ethical issue or dilemma regarding client care or the organization's policies exists.

## **How are referrals made?**

A referral can be made by filling out the Consult Request Form that is available on the Intranet. If you need help deciding whether an ethics consultation would help you, please feel free to talk to the Ethics committee chair by calling (709) 290 1097 or go to Central Health's website: [www.centralhealth.nl.ca](http://www.centralhealth.nl.ca) and click on the Ethics



contact link. If the concern is health related and requires immediate attention please contact a member of the client care team.

## **What information is needed?**

The Ethics committee will expect a completed referral form including:

- A clear statement of the concern
- An idea about what has already been done to deal with the concern
- The name of the person(s) making the referral
- An idea of how urgent the concern is

## **What does the Ethics consultation consider?**

Ethics consultations consider the following ethical principles (guidelines that help make the best possible decisions):

- Respect for client autonomy and self-determination
- Beneficence (doing good)
- Non-maleficence (not doing harm)
- Justice and fairness

## **What results can be expected?**

All consultations are confidential and are bound by the same policies and procedures as other client and organizational records.

The Ethics committee's role is advisory only. The final decision about a health related issue lies with the client (or legal representative) and the care team. The final decision about organizational policy lies with the organization's leadership and/or governance teams.