

MICs GROUP OF HEALTH SERVICES... Administration/ Policy/Directive	TOPIC: Ethics	NUMBER: ADM-610
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ETHICS

Ethics is defined in the Webster's dictionary as "a principle of right or good behaviour" and a "system of moral principles or values", the "study of the general nature of morals and the specific moral choices an individual makes in relating to others" and the "rules or standards of conduct governing the members of a profession".

The MICs Group of Health Services recognizes that there may be ethical issues in our facilities. Ethical issues are primarily concerned with moral and ethical aspects of patient/resident care. If an ethical issue arises then MICs will bring together at least 3 Members of the MICs Ethics Committee who have received additional training in Ethics, along with external resources as required which may include members of existing Pastoral Care Committees, Ethics Committees members from larger area Hospitals, and, if necessary, an Ethicist. (Lawyers will not be included in the committee to prevent it becoming a law committee as the lawyer is apt to provide his/her interpretation of the law). This committee will not act as a medical committee but physicians and nurses may sit on the committee with other members. The members of the committee will have an equal voice. Issues will be addressed utilizing the MICs Ethical Decision-Making Framework (*refer to Appendix A*). Decisions of the Committee will be reported to the MICs Chief Executive Officer for implementation or necessary follow-up as required.

Any MICs Team Member may request the Ethics Committee be brought together to review an issue. Such a request would be submitted to the Team Member's respective Executive Leader who would then convene the Committee in a timely manner. Information regarding this process will be communicated to all Team Members on an ongoing basis. Patients/Residents faced with an ethical issue may also have their issues raised through this process by speaking with a Team Member or by reviewing the Patient/Resident Ethics brochure available at each site.

Each facility will establish a list of the Members making up their Committee and a key contact. Please refer to Terms of Reference for the MICs Ethics Committee (*refer to Appendix B*).

It must be recognized that there are often no easy answers to ethical dilemmas.

The overall role of the MICs Ethics Committee shall be to:

- § Provide a forum where patient, resident, client, family, staff and volunteer concerns around ethical issues are addressed and to support mechanisms for addressing MICs ethical issues;
- § Provide input to Senior Management on methods to monitor adherence to the ethical guidelines that have been endorsed by the Board;

- § Provide an atmosphere of open communication among patients, residents, clients, families, staff, volunteers and Senior Management on ethical issues;
- § Support and suggest educational opportunities in relation to ethical issues as required by Committee members, staff in general or by staff within particular programs; and
- § Approve pertinent guidelines on ethical issues relevant to the care provided at MICs facilities.

Depending on the circumstances involved, Ethical issues **may include but are not limited** to the following:

- § decision making and the professional/patient/resident relationship;
- § truth telling and disclosure of information to patients;
- § privacy and confidentiality;
- § informed consent to treatment;
- § refusal of treatment;
- § foregoing life-sustaining treatment;
- § access to health care;
- § controlling the cost of health care; and
- § allocation and rationing of health care resources.

All Team Members must be aware of and respect the MICs Patient/Resident Bill of Rights and are expected to act in an appropriate ethical manner as set out in the MICs Code of Ethics (*refer to Appendix C*), and, where applicable, it is further expected that all professional staff will act in accordance with the Code of Ethics established by their professional organization. These codes should be reviewed on an ongoing basis and readily available if ever questioned. MICs Patient/Resident Bill of Rights must also be posted in all Patient and Resident Areas.

Attachments:

- Appendix A – Ethical Decision Making Framework
- Appendix B – MICs Ethics Committee Terms of Reference
- Appendix C – MICs Code of Ethics

APPENDIX A

ETHICAL DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK

- I** – identify the facts
- D** – determine the ethical principles in conflict
- E** – explore the options
- A** – act on your decision and evaluate
- S** – self-evaluate your decision

STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE FACTS

Gather information/facts on the case.

Re-state the details of the case. What are the main issues or areas of concern/tension? Who are the individuals involved? Who else needs to be involved? How does the client's history/prognosis affect this case? Are there other factors to consider, including company policies, directives and regulations?

Reflect on the different emotions.

Reflect on the emotions of: 1) the client
2) family/others
3) you

Examine the emotional factors influencing each individual, such as existing feelings values, biases and prior experiences.

Ask yourself: 1) How do I feel about this particular client/family?
2) How are my life experiences influencing my reaction?
3) What are the family/cultural/societal traditions and customs influencing my reaction?

STEP 2: determine the ethical principles in conflict

Identify ethical issues.

What ethical principles or values are in conflict? Refer to the MICS Ethics Committee Code of Ethics for further details.

PRINCIPLE	EXPLAIN THE ISSUE

STEP 3: explore the options

Explore options and consider their strengths and weaknesses.

Brainstorm and discuss options either alone or with peers. Be creative and use your imagination. Consider a compromise. Predict the outcomes for each alternative. Does the alternative fit with the client/family values? Question whether the alternative meets the company policies, directives and regulations.

OPTION	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES

STEP 4: ACT ON YOUR DECISION AND EVALUATE

Develop an action plan.

Given all the information that you have and choose the best option available. Develop an action plan. Present your suggested alternative and action plan to the client and those involved in such a way that it allows them to accept the plan. Re-examine the alternatives if other factors come to light, if the situation changes, or if an agreement cannot be reached. Determine when to evaluate the plan. Document and communicate the plan. The action plan should be documented in the chart.

STEP 5: SELF-EVALUATE YOUR DECISION

Review and evaluate.

How do you feel about the decision and the outcome? What would you do differently next time? What would you do the same? What have you learned about yourself? What have you learned about this decision-making process?

APPENDIX B

MICs ETHICS COMMITTEE Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the MICs Ethics Committee is to:

- 1) Review policies pertaining to ethics
- 2) Provide education and resources to the Team Members
- 3) Provide support in ethical decision-making
- 4) Review research protocols in reference to the MICs Mission & Vision Statement

Membership

- Membership should consist of people with an express interest in Ethics as opposed to randomly appointed members.
- There should be a mixture of representatives from all three MICs sites with diversity of the membership from all disciplines.
 - ✓ Physicians
 - ✓ Front-line workers
 - ✓ Community Representatives
 - ✓ Pastoral Representatives
 - ✓ Palliative Care Team Member
 - ✓ Other resource people as required

Accountability

- The MICs Ethics Committee is accountable to the MICs Chief Executive Officer and the MICs Board of Directors.

Meetings

- Meetings will be held twice a year or as necessary.

APPENDIX C

MICs CODE OF ETHICS

The MICs Group of Health Services is committed to being an integral part of the communities we serve. We are responsible for acting professionally and in a client-centered manner, upholding the dignity and honour of our clients and practicing in accordance with ethical principles and values. This Code of Ethics is intended to provide us with specific ethical principles and values to address situations we may encounter, and to guide us in our relationships with clients, family members and others in the support team, other health care practitioners, and the public. This code is intended to complement laws, codes and standards of professional practice.

AUTONOMY

The right to self-determination, independence and freedom. It involves the provider's willingness to provide information to the client so that they may make informed decisions and subsequently respect a client's right to choose what is right for them self, even if the provider does not agree with the client's decision. Informed consent is an example of how this principle is applied.

CARING

To do "good". This requires that the provider performs acts that will benefit the client. Quality care requires that the provider understands the client from a holistic perspective that respects their beliefs, emotions, desires and values, as well as those of the client's family, relatives or significant others. Caring means to demonstrate compassion, to listen actively, to support, take care of and nurturing the client.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The obligation to keep the information of the patient and the organization confidential. Professional standards and privacy legislation regarding the privacy of personal health information provide guidance with the conditions under which health information may be disclosed morally and legally.

INTEGRITY

To be truthful and not consciously mislead or deceive clients. Based on mutual trust and respect for human dignity, this truth requires open and honest communications in a way that help clients cope with the anxiety that this knowledge may cause. Concealing or guarding clients from the truth to "protect" them is rarely ethically justifiable.

OPTIMAL STANDARD OF CARE

Committed to provide the highest quality of services that will benefit the client within available resources.

PROFESSIONALISM

To exhibit a courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike manner in the workplace. Characterized by or conforming to the technical or ethical standards of a profession.

PRIVACY

The client's right as a patient to determine when, how, and to what extent they will share information about them self with others. The client will be able to make this determination because the provider will

notify the client regarding the purposes for which the provider will collect, use or disclose the client's personal health information. The provider will ask the client for permission to collect, use or disclose the client's personal health information where applicable. Privacy is best addressed at or before the time the provider will collect the client's information.

RESPECT

In all our interactions, the provider will demonstrate profound respect for human dignity. The provider will be responsive and sensitive to the diversity among clients and staff groups.

SAFETY

To protect against harm. This requires that the provider shall not harm their client, even if the client is not able to protect themselves. The workplace hazards can put the client at risk. The provider must identify these risks and take action to prevent injuries.

TEAM WORK

To recognize that there may be a competitive element in the working relationships and to agree to respect one another's roles and to work together in the spirit of collaboration to maximize the effectiveness of the client services.

TRANSPARENCY

The obligation to be fair to all people, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, medical diagnosis, social status, financial status or religious beliefs. This may include distributive justice as equal access for and fair allocation of resources, and may also include procedural justice, or shared decision-making, including the person in the decisions that affect them.

WELL-BEING

To use a holistic approach to client's health care needs by acknowledging all things important to them.