



## What Types of Problems can the Consultation Team Help With?

The Bioethics Committee members have helped patients, families, and doctors with decisions about when to use breathing machines or feeding tubes, if treatments are helping the patient, and what choices the patient would make if he or she could do so. The team will listen to the concerns, assist in gathering important information, and help to evaluate the questions about treatment that may exist. They will also provide guidance regarding treatment and the difficult choices you or your family might have to make. The Bioethics Committee will not make decisions or direct treatment for you or your loved one.

## Who can ask for a Consultation?

You or anyone who is involved in your care. For example, you or a family member could request help, as can your doctors, nurses, or social workers. The Bioethics Committee aims to determine the best plan for each individual situation.

## Is the Information About My Case Confidential?

Yes. The Bioethics Committee treats the facts of each patient's case with the strictest confidence. Everyone involved respects your right to privacy and confidentiality.

## How do I Request Help From the Bioethics Committee?

Patients and families can ask their doctor, nurse, social worker, or minister for help in beginning the process. **Please call 909.920.4820 and ask to speak with social services.**

# A Place to Turn

When Faced with Difficult Choices



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Modern healthcare is remarkable in its ability to diagnose, treat illness and injury, and extend life. However, advanced medical technology sometimes creates complicated choices and raises difficult questions regarding a patient’s rights, advance directives (a written statement of a person’s wishes regarding medical treatment), and the healthcare team’s responsibilities. In some cases, it raises questions about whether or not treatment to extend life should be continued. This often presents tough choices for patients, families, and their caregivers. If patients are unable to take part in their own healthcare decisions, for example, those involved in their care may find it difficult to make decisions for them or may disagree over what decisions to make. In an effort to maintain the highest standards in the delivery of patient care, and to provide resources to families faced with these decisions, San Antonio Regional Hospital’s Bioethics Committee is available to consult with you, your family, and your caregivers.

### Get Help with Tough Decisions About:

- Treatment to keep patient alive
- Moral and legal issues of patient care
- The use of comfort care
- Use of life-saving measures
- Medical care disagreements
- Living wills or advance directives
- Treatment options

### Who is Part of the Bioethics Committee?

The San Antonio Regional Hospital Bioethics Committee is made up of experts from many different professions who are available to help you make difficult decisions and to discuss the moral and legal issues of patient care. The professionals include:

- Administration
- Community members
- Patient advocate
- Doctors
- Medical issues experts
- Nurses
- Religious support
- Social services

### How can the Bioethics Committee Help?

When people are very sick and are hospitalized, they or their families sometimes need to make difficult decisions. For example, should the doctors use a “feeding tube” if the patient cannot swallow? Or should a patient whose kidneys no longer work be placed on dialysis? Sometimes families ask what they should do if a loved one has cancer that is spreading and cannot be stopped. A patient who has suffered a severe stroke may not be “waking up.” What would the patient want the doctors to do? These are difficult questions for many people.

The Bioethics Committee is here to help patients and families find out about their choices and to support them in deciding what to do.

### What is Involved in a Consultation?

Consultations are meetings that include the patients or their families, doctors, members of the care team, and members of the Bioethics Committee. The goal of these meetings is to help decide what choices would be best for the patient. Consultations are always supportive and respectful of personal, cultural, and religious beliefs of all concerned.

