

UNC HOSPITAL ETHICS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2010

The UNC Hospitals Ethics Committee (HEC) met on a monthly basis during 2010, with leadership as follows: Dr. Watson A. Bowes Jr., Professor Emeritus of Obstetrics & Gynecology, as Chair. Arlene Davis, RN, JD, Associate Professor of Social Medicine was the Director of the Ethics Consultation Service, and Co-Director of the Ethics Education Service with Rebecca Walker, PhD, Assistant Professor of Social Medicine. Louise Winstanly, LLB, MSB, Adjunct Assistant Professor at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, Director of Policy Development and Review. Janis Zarkowsky was the Committee Administrator/Coordinator.

Membership: 6 regular members left the Committee including two medical students, and 5 new regular members were appointed including two medical students. One new ex-officio member was appointed to the Committee. The list of members is attached.

A. Policy Development and Review.

The HEC received 14 policy requests in 2010, a significant increase over the 6 requests in the prior year. Requests included donation after cardiac death, end-of-life interventions, and conscientious objection. Increasing requests for policy consultations prompted appointment of a Policy Director, Louise Winstanly, in 2010, to assist our Chair with the complex questions and research needed for policy review and development.

B. Consultation Service

The committee received 47 formal requests for specific patient consultation and responded to an additional 20 informal consultations throughout UNC Hospitals. The formal consultations are conducted by teams comprised of several members of the HEC, led by a Team Leader who has experience in the ethics consultation process. All consultations are supervised by the Director of the Consultation Service and selected consultations are reviewed and discussed at the monthly meetings of the entire Committee.

E. Ethics Education Service

The Committee received 47 requests for ethics education in addition to our Ethics on Rounds in the MICU and PICU, and our physician series for the Emergency Department, pediatric residents, and transplant teams. Most of this education contributes to the residency programs' needs for ethics training. Also the service provides 4 hours of orientation for new members of the HEC and ongoing education for HEC members (including a library of over 90 volumes on biomedical topics). We continued our well-received ethics sessions for fourth year medical students, at the request of their physician directors. These medical students, and many residents, have become familiar with our education services because of our growing opportunities to reach out to them in various settings. For a second year a graduate student in biomedical ethics was accepted as an HEC intern.

The HEC intern, while receiving specific mentoring and education, provides substantial assistance to the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Watson A. Bowes Jr., Chair

Attachment: List of members of the UNC Hospital Ethics Committee