

Increasing Awareness of Ethics Consultation Availability Among Patients and Families

An IntegratedEthics™ Tool for National Compliance and Ethics Week

Scope/Purpose:

Patients and families often face ethical concerns when value conflicts arise during the care of a patient. An ethics program must have an effective mechanism for responding to these concerns. By providing a forum for discussion and methods for careful analysis, effective ethics consultation (EC) promotes health care practices consistent with high ethical standards.

In 2012, only 48 percent of VA IE programs reported that patients and families receive written information about access to EC. National Compliance and Ethics Week is an opportunity to improve patient and family awareness of the availability of EC as a service for responding to ethical concerns.

Goal:

Patients and families will understand how to obtain an ethics consultation and what services the consultation can provide.

Suggestions:

Work with facility administration to:

- Keep EC flyers and brochures stocked in every patient waiting area
 - flyers available at <http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/ieposters.asp>
 - brochures available at http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/docs/integratedethics/20121121_fillable_ec_brochure.pdf
- Provide an EC flyer or brochure to every Veteran who enrolls for care
- Provide an EC flyer or brochure to every patient admitted for care to the inpatient service and Community Living Center
- Incorporate EC flyer or brochure content into:
 - patient handbook
 - house officers' handbook
- Make EC flyer or brochure available through facility intranet/internet

- Regularly place an “ad” that promotes EC in newsletters that patients and families will read
- Ensure that EC posters (large versions of the EC flyer) are hung in patient common areas
- Provide EC flyers or brochures to the Patient Advocate’s Office for distribution as applicable

We encourage you to make these practices sustainable by building processes and procedures that are likely to endure after the educational event.