

From the Spring 2001 Newsletter

SPOTLIGHT ON EVENTS

State of the Art Conference: Making Informed Consent Meaningful

A State of the Art (SOTA) conference on informed consent and participation in research was held March 7-9, 2001 in Washington, DC. Sponsored by the VHA Office of Research and Development in collaboration with the National Center for Ethics and the Employee Education System, the conference brought together VHA leaders, researchers, experts in research ethics, Veterans Service Organizations representatives, and clinicians to discuss the challenges of informed consent in research. Eleven papers on aspects of informed consent, including the therapeutic misconception, voluntariness, and enrolling decisionally impaired subjects, served as background for work group discussions on specific topics. Publication of the commissioned papers, as well as support for additional VHA sponsored research on informed consent, is planned. For further information contact Karen Bossi via email at Karen.Bossi@med.va.gov or 617 232-9500 ext 5690

Ethics Discussed at Pain Management and End-of-Life Care Conference

The Second Annual National Leadership Conference on Pain Management and End-of-Life Care, sponsored by the Office of Patient Care Services and the Employee Education System, engaged several hundred VHA clinicians and leaders in discussions of how to improve end-of-life care in VHA. The conference, held March 13-15 in Alexandria, VA, combined plenary sessions, break out sessions and small group discussions on end-of-life care topics. Dr. Robert Pearlman, MD, MPH, a Medical Ethicist with the National Center for Ethics and a geriatrician at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System, co-led a breakout session on advance care planning.

Ethical Issues in Long Term Care: State Veterans Homes

The National Association of State Veterans Homes held its Mid-Winter meeting in Alexandria, VA March 3-7, 2001. Michael Cantor, MD, JD, of the National Center for Ethics, addressed the assembled leaders from state veterans homes on ethical issues in long term care. Medical decision making, privacy, and resource allocation were some of the key concerns discussed. Several ethics cases were presented to the audience for group dialogue and problem solving. After describing the ethics resources available within VHA, including local ethics advisory committees and the National Center for Ethics, Dr. Cantor concluded by encouraging further collaboration between VHA and state veterans homes in developing and sharing ethics policies and standards.

[Click here](#) to see a list of Upcoming Events.