



# IntegratedEthics In Action

Issue 26

Promising Practices — Emerging Champions

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## Learning Tour Sites Gain Knowledge, Share Best Practices of Local IE Programs

### West Texas: “Many Insights About the Nature of Ethics”

“The visit was great,” said Amy Halfmann, RD, LD, and IE Program Officer (IEPO) for the West Texas IE program. “It provided our ethics committee a chance to see our best practices. At times you don’t see what you’re doing well until someone comes in and points it out. The visit also showed what some of our weaknesses are, and where to go.”

During the tour, the NCEHC team discovered that the facility has a very robust IE Council. Meetings are well attended, and the body includes a wide variety of participants, including a Veteran representative and candidates in the Leadership, Effectiveness, Accountability, Development (LEAD) program who are exposed to ethical leadership principles as part of their leadership training.

Ms. Halfmann attributes the facility Council’s strength to the leadership of the facility’s previous Director and the establishment of policies and procedures that enable continuity for working on goals. In addition, original members actively mentor newer members. “We have a family atmosphere,” she said. “We can speak our mind and work off each other because there is a lot of trust.”

Leadership demonstrates their support for IE in other ways as well. When an IE position opens, the Director personally solicits candidates and remains actively involved in the selection process. Council members are frequently invited to present on program activities during meetings of the Executive Leadership Council, and employees are encouraged to attend their departments’ budget meetings that are led by facility leaders.

However, the West Texas IE team acknowledges that there is always room for improvement. As a result of insights gained from the NCEHC visitors, the facility team is launching several new initiatives, beginning with a workgroup to study how the facility can address rumors and gossip. “Our workgroup will first determine what rumors are circling the facility and how employees are viewing them,” Ms. Halfmann explained. “We will develop a short survey that, once discussed with the union, will be distributed to a random sampling of employees.” The workgroup also plans to create an “Ask It” button on the facility intranet where employees can ask about things they may have heard around the facility.

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***“One of the main insights we gained was that ethics issues emerge when there are two rights — not when there’s a right and a wrong,”***

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To further educate employees, the Council wants to launch an IE University that will develop a training module for departments to orient new employees and remind all staff about ethics and IE services. For example, the training will show how employees can submit an ethics consultation request through the facility intranet. The training will also give departments guidance on how to approach the topic of ethics. “We want to make sure departments are talking about ethics every month in their meetings,” Ms. Halfmann said.

Other plans include writing articles on ethics issues for the facility newsletter and partnering with the emergency management

**N**ational Center for Ethics in Health Care (NCEHC) subject matter experts representing Ethics Consultation, Preventive Ethics, and IntegratedEthics management conducted Learning Tours in June at two previously selected sites, West Texas Veterans Health Care System (Big Spring) and South Texas Veterans Health Care System (San Antonio). Developed to help facilities improve the effectiveness of their IE programs, the tours provided these sites with hands-on coaching, education, and real-time feedback to assist them in furthering their programs’ development. In addition, the tours gave the two facilities an opportunity to share their bright spots to give NCEHC a more comprehensive understanding of the achievements and challenges of strong IE programs.

“We’re very proud of the hard work and dedication of the staff that we saw at both facilities,” said Basil Rowland, MSW, IE Manager, Field Operations, who was a member of the NCEHC visiting team. “It’s evident that the IE staff deeply cared about the ethical environment and culture at their facilities and their excitement and energy was very evident.”

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***Above left: Andrew Welch, Interim Director at the West Texas VA Health Care System, discusses the value of ethics during a facility wide townhall meeting.***

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## Tomah Receives “Virtual” Learning Tour

**A**s a conceptual test, this summer the NCEHC conducted a short virtual Learning Tour with the IntegratedEthics (IE) team, facility leadership, and supervisors at Tomah (WI) VA Medical Center. While structured like the in-person tours and led by NCEHC subject matter experts, this tour was conducted in two meetings via teleconference.

The facility’s high 58% response rate on the IE Staff Survey shows that the IE team at Tomah has already done a good job of informing people about the IE program and getting them interested in ethics. “But we wanted to make ourselves better,” said IE Program Officer Leah Finch, RHIT, CCS-P. “We have been talking about IE since 2007 and doing a lot of educational events. Now we need to take action on being more transparent, particularly with regard to decision making. People need to know what’s going on, and be given a chance to voice opinions and ask questions.”

The first session was three hours, and attended by the acting facility Director, supervisors, the IE Advisory Committee, and IE function coordinators. In addition to plenary sessions, the tour included breakout meetings on Ethical Leadership, Ethics Consultation, and Preventive Ethics. The second session was a one-hour briefing with the

Director and members of the quadrad and Advisory Committee.

During the meetings, participants discussed numerous ways to engage staff: allowing them to observe meetings of major decision-making bodies, providing ways to anonymously ask questions and voice opinions (e.g., a tip line or comment box), and holding focus groups to gauge trust levels and track progress on initiatives. Members of the quadrad also plan to participate in staff and supervisor meetings of their service lines to talk about the budget and other important topics. According to Ms. Finch, “They want to hold these meetings to be more visible, open, and available to their supervisors. They want to give the supervisors a chance to give input into certain decisions.”

Finally, the NCEHC experts shared ideas for how the Advisory Committee could become more strategic in its efforts to improve the facility’s ethical climate.

But, while discussing opportunities for improvement, tour participants also heard that it was important to focus on the positive. “We need to tell the staff through town halls and all-staff messages all the good things we do here,” said Ms. Finch.

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**“It was nice to be able to hear fresh ideas, and their professional opinions about what we should take on — what’s too big and what’s too small.”**

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As a result of the tour, the facility’s IE team now has a record of what needs to change and feels confident that they will make progress. “It was very motivational to talk with the NCEHC subject matter experts. It was nice to be able to hear fresh ideas, and their professional opinions about what we should take on — what’s too big and what’s too small,” said Ms. Finch. “We’re committed to improving the whole climate at the facility. We’re not just looking at one workgroup, but need to boost the overall ethical culture. We are taking baby steps, but we’ll get there.”

The NCEHC is reviewing this pilot effort and considering whether to offer a virtual tour in addition to the in-person tours in 2014. For more information, contact Basil Rowland, MSW, IE Manager, Field Operations, at [Basil.Rowland@va.gov](mailto:Basil.Rowland@va.gov).

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## NCEHC Conducts Learning Tours at 2 Texas Facilities

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team to address ethical dilemmas that may arise during a flu pandemic.

“One of the main insights we gained was that ethics issues emerge when there are two rights — not when there’s a right and a wrong,” said Ms. Halfmann. “Because the NCEHC team explained this concept so clearly, we will now be able to share it with our employees. Also, we were encouraged to stress that our IE program provides a service that employees can access if they have ethics concerns. Then, if we need help, we can reach out to regional and national resources.”

### **South Texas: “Guidance on Making IE Stronger”**

At South Texas, the NCEHC team discovered that employees have really bought into the Value of the Month activity. Four IE Council members lead the discussions as part of broader efforts to effect culture change through education. Further, as part of its commitment to improvement, the Council strongly advocates the use of IE tools, such as the Facility Workbook and IE Staff Survey results, to add clarity and

meaning to their program metrics. IEC members also engage in other ethics-related activities at the facility, including contributing articles to the newsletter.

The facility has a highly visible Ethics Consultation service with deeply involved — and high-level — leadership. The service evaluates cases with the requestor(s), and the entire service reviews each case with the consultant at monthly meetings. Nevertheless, the NCEHC team was able to suggest some enhancements. “As a result of discussions during the Learning Tour, we now track not only the numbers of ethics consults on reports, but also the cumulative time spent on the case by the consultant/team and the IE domains in which they fall,” explained Karen Reed, D.Min, BCC, Staff Chaplain and IEPO. The information is then shared at the Council meeting and in the IE report to the facility’s senior leadership.

During the Learning Tour, the NCEHC team also discussed how the Preventive Ethics function can use its tools (such as the “Choosing Issues for Preventive Ethics” tracking log) to more readily identify systems issues and refer them for resolution

through the ISSUES approach. The facility had already been successfully utilizing ISSUES cycles to improve efficiencies of system processes described in the Patient Rights and Responsibilities Chapter of the Joint Commission.

Finally, Chaplain Reed reported that the Learning Tour has challenged the South Texas IE program to develop a Council structure that was based on positions (rather than individuals) to ease transitions when members leave and are replaced by new ones. “We have begun by identifying service representatives for the Council from a broader base and clarifying functions on the Council. This intentional effort will take time to accomplish and will assist the IE program to better function,” said Chaplain Reed.

The NCEHC hopes to offer Learning Tours to sites with strong IE programs again in Fiscal Year 2014. The solicitation for applications will be released on the IE listserv early in January. For further information, contact Basil Rowland, MSW, IE Manager, Field Operations, at [Basil.Rowland@va.gov](mailto:Basil.Rowland@va.gov).

# **“The Commitment of Our IE Professionals Inspires Me to Continuously Improve Our Programs”: IE Program Champion Sheryl Kittelson**



*Sheryl Kittelson, MA, VHA-CM, has served as VISN 23’s Point of Contact (POC) for the IntegratedEthics (IE) program since its national roll-out in 2007.*

## **How did you first become interested in ethics?**

In 2004, I became a member of St. Cloud VA Health Care System’s Ethics Committee as part of my new assignment as Com-

pliance and Business Integrity Officer. Although the committee was established to address clinical ethics, it was ahead of its time by also including administrative/business representatives and embracing discussions beyond the clinical case. It was motivating to see the committee’s positive impact on direct care to our Veterans and assistance to families who were faced with difficult end-of-life care decisions. At the same time, I was able to bring my business and systems improvement experience to inform discussions on the processes affecting ethics cases.

## **Why did you become involved with the IE program?**

When St. Cloud was selected to be part of the IE Demonstration Group, I served as the Leadership Coordinator. During this pilot phase, the roles and responsibilities were purposely less prescriptive and, as a result, staffing for key roles varied widely among pilot locations. We encountered many challenges in implementing the pilot program and made continuous modifications. The lessons we learned are now evident in IE’s core program materials. I appreciated the opportunity to work with NCEHC staff and provide input in shaping the program as we know it today.

## **What is your current IE role? What other, if any, roles have you held?**

In addition to VISN POC, I have served as a facility Leadership Coordinator and IE Program Officer.

## **Regarding your VISN IE program, what is your proudest moment?**

It is difficult to identify a specific moment. I am most proud of the IE professionals in VISN 23. Their ongoing commitment and support of both local and VISN efforts inspire and motivate me to continuously improve our programs. These professionals focus their efforts on enhancing the organizational ethics culture and maintaining the highest quality care for the Veterans we serve.

## **What challenges have you faced in implementing IE at your VISN? How did you overcome them?**

Most recently, we have been challenged with a high degree of turnover in key IE positions. In Fiscal Year 13, the VISN IE Advisory Board chartered a workgroup to establish a systematic approach to orient new staff to various IE leadership roles. While primarily utilizing national orientation tools, we outlined an orientation process and established a discipline-specific timeline of activities to assist in prioritizing actions for new staff. We also developed a peer mentor program that pairs seasoned IE professionals

with new staff to review tools and action items. This approach has enabled staff to make smoother transitions into their IE roles and minimized setbacks in program performance when staffing changes occur.

## **How did you work with leadership to obtain resources for the IE program?**

VISN 23 has been fortunate to obtain support for an annual VISN IE conference. The objectives of the conference are to enhance ethics knowledge and expertise, address operational gaps identified through program assessment tools, and share best practices between IE programs. Although IE program roles in our VISN (like at most VA facilities) continue to be collateral assignments, the conference gives staff dedicated time to assess current program activities and develop strategies to strengthen future initiatives.

## **Overall, what has your program accomplished? How has it contributed to the improvement of ethics quality at your VISN?**

VISN 23’s IE program continues to evolve over time. The Advisory Board meets on a monthly basis to support and provide oversight of program activities. The VISN also hosts frequent conference calls for IE Consultation Coordinators and Preventive Ethics Coordinators that provide a virtual forum for networking and problem solving. In addition to developing the IE Orientation Program, the Advisory Board has chartered workgroups to formulate a focus group protocol for assessing IE Staff Survey results, develop state-authorized portable orders policies to address national directive changes, and establish documentation guidelines for Ethics Consultation Services. Finally, we encourage facilities to share their ideas and work products to maximize knowledge and expertise.

## **Do you have any other thoughts to share with our readers?**

To maintain success, the IE program must be reliant on the systems and processes that you build into the program. I recommend putting your program plans in writing and assigning accountability beyond core members. Utilize tools from the NCEHC or your ethics colleagues to assess and prioritize program activities. And, most importantly, recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of your program and the IE professionals that make it possible.

## **Breaking News from Ethics Consultation. . . New URL Address for ECWeb**

The new web address is:

<https://vaww.ecweb.ethics.va.gov/>.

Note that this URL address now includes an “s” after “http” because it has been moved to a different server. All ECWeb users should bookmark this new link as a “Favorite.”

This change should resolve the recent technical problems associated with ECWeb. However, the EC team will continue to address any concerns as quickly and thoroughly as possible so that users can continue to document their ethics consultations.

Forward screenshots of any technical problems to Barbara L. Chanko, RN, MBA, Health Care Ethicist, at [Barbara.Chanko@va.gov](mailto:Barbara.Chanko@va.gov).

## Promoting Fairness on the Job:

# The Role of “Procedural Justice” in an Ethical Organization

This article briefly describes “procedural justice” as it is currently applied in the field of organizational health and the concept’s vital role in an ethical workplace. The accompanying article, the first in an occasional series, describes specific initiatives of the IE program at Durham VAMC that have successfully embodied these principles and practices. The accompanying article, “Durham VAMC Promotes Transparency in Leadership Decisions,” provides some examples of how IE programs can engage in procedurally just practices to increase the transparency of decision-making processes.

**A** key finding on the IntegratedEthics Staff Survey is that when employees perceive that they are being treated fairly, they are also more likely to perceive that they work in an ethical environment and culture.

### Procedural Justice and its Benefits

In the workplace context, “procedural justice” occurs when staff perceives that the processes used to make decisions within an organization are fair. This includes applying and enforcing policies and procedures in an accurate, consistent, and equitable manner. It means treating staff affected by a decision with respect, dignity, and concern, and listening to the perspectives raised by all parties. Procedurally just practices can be applied, for example, to eliciting employee input, resolving disputes, and allocating resources. A growing body of research indicates, in fact, that if all parties are able to voice their perspective, they are more likely to look favorably on the organization even if the final decision or action is not in their favor.<sup>1</sup>

Why should organizations embrace procedural justice? Because of the “fair process effect.” When employees believe they work for a fair, ethical organization, they tend to trust their supervisors, remain committed to their jobs and organization, comply with leadership decisions, and engage in fewer retaliatory behaviors, such as theft.<sup>1</sup> Health care studies have even found an association between the practice of procedural justice and positive patient outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

Further, establishing just processes for making decisions and following up on employee concerns (including ethical concerns) demonstrates the organization’s

commitment to maintaining an ethical workplace. Employees who trust that decisions are fair and that their problems will be handled fairly are more likely to share concerns so that management can address and possibly prevent or minimize potential systemic issues. According to a recent Ethics Resource Center report<sup>1</sup>, a fair process for institutional decision making and dispute resolution involves:

- Neutral and unbiased investigators
- Clear explanation of procedures
- Consistent application of rules
- Consideration of issues raised by all parties
- Gathering of appropriate evidence
- Factually based decisions
- Fair and respectful treatment of complainants, including caring for the complainant’s needs and concerns

When such a process was followed, employees were likely to report that they were

satisfied even if they did not agree with the outcome of the investigation — and that they would be willing to report other problems in the future.

### Leaders Can Be Trained in Procedural Justice

Fortunately, leaders and managers can be trained to be fair. The *Handbook of Organizational Justice*<sup>3</sup> discusses how to design effective leadership trainings for applying procedurally just practices to real-life management situations — and how to motivate leaders to take the training. Trainings, for instance, can emphasize that perceptions of fairness are linked to trust in supervisors, job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, compliance with decisions, and employee retention. Leadership behaviors, therefore, can have a direct impact on organizational outcomes.

Because most leaders probably do not perceive that they are unfair, procedural justice

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## Embracing Procedural Justice:

### Durham VAMC Increases the Transparency of Leadership Decisions

*This article describes how an IE initiative, such as that implemented through an Ethical Leadership improvement project or ISSUES cycle, can apply the concepts of procedural justice (see accompanying article and sidebar) to improve ethics quality across the facility.*

When results on the 2010 IntegratedEthics Staff Survey (IESS) were tallied, management learned that many staff at Durham (NC) VA Medical Center did not understand the reasoning behind local resource allocation decisions. Believing that transparency in this area could be improved, facility Director Ralph Gigliotti, FACHE, alerted VISN leadership. As a result, the 2011 Leadership Development Institute (LDI) class was assigned to work on this topic across the VISN. This issue was considered especially important for several reasons. According to research on procedural justice (see accompanying article), when employees do not understand how or why certain decisions are made, they might question resulting policies and practices and not feel as committed to the institution’s mission and priorities. Second, facility leadership were

committed to creating an organizational environment that prioritized being ethical and transparent.

Through the IntegratedEthics (IE) Council, Mr. Gigliotti suggested that LDI participants initiate an ISSUES cycle (i.e., quality improvement methods applied to improve ethical practices) on improving employee understanding of the decision-making process at Durham. “Our charge was to promote inclusion of employee input and transparency of ethical considerations in resource allocation,” said LDI graduate Shajuana McMillan, PharmD, member of Durham’s Preventive Ethics (PE) team, and current IE Program Officer, who coordinated the improvement effort. In response, the LDI team suggested inviting facility employees to meetings of the Resource Management Council (RMC), which makes decisions about filling positions and allocating funds. Leadership agreed.

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# Durham Increases Transparency Through Open Meetings, Round Tables, Other Communications

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## Staff Attendance at Resource Management Council Meetings

The PE team sent invitations to all staff, accompanied by a form for supervisors to authorize their employees to attend the meeting. The invitations were well received by both clinical and non-clinical employees who represented different sectors of the medical center. Employees observed the meetings from a gallery and forwarded questions to the RMC members; the questions were answered either right away or at the end of meeting. When the meeting was over, the observers offered feedback on an evaluation form.

"Based on the feedback we learned from observers that attended the RMC meetings, we know they grew in their appreciation of the complexities of the decision-making process and appreciated access to seeing how these decisions are made," said Dr. McMillan.

This exposure enabled more employees to understand the resource management process, such as how a service could request a new position. It may have also helped alleviate the negative impression that some services were favored over others. Furthermore, this process enabled employees to ask managers questions directly. "The process helped them recognize that they, too, have a voice with our leadership," said Dr. McMillan. "Finally, it helped them realize that leadership has nothing to hide. This process provided an opportunity to staff, one that gave direct access to decision makers and information used to make decisions."

Even though the facility has changed leadership since the practice was instituted, employees are still invited to observe the RMC meetings, and they continue to accept.

## Staff Attendance at Space Committee Meetings

Inspired by this practice of inviting employees to RMC meetings, leadership then thought about other ways to improve transparency in their decision making. For example, the Space Committee wanted to share the challenges it faced in approving requests for changes at this undersized facility. Therefore, members decided to open their monthly meetings so that staff would understand how space decisions were made and could

learn about the implications of Durham's significant space deficit.

The facility Director's office now sends out an all-employee e-mail inviting staff to attend the meetings. Employees whose services have submitted Space Committee Requests are especially encouraged to attend. The e-mail includes a form that employees submit to their supervisors for approval. There is also space to describe their interest in observing the Space Committee, or to comment on the meeting's discussion.

"The response has been very positive," said Morgan Jones, MSPH, former Staff Assistant to Durham's Director/Facility Planner. "Employees from all services and levels are attending the meetings and observing how diligently the Space Committee reviews the requests and tries to find a way to approve them. As a result, trust in the overall process of allocating space has improved, and the Space Committee environment has become more collegial."

This access has even had an impact on the nature of requests to the Committee. Ms. Jones reports that since the committee has opened the meetings, services have shown an effort to maximize the use of their current space. For example, they are now requesting interior improvements or efficiency reviews rather than simply asking for additional space.

## Service Round Tables with Leadership

In further efforts to improve transparency and communication at Durham, DeAnne Seekins, MBA, the current facility Director, and her executive leadership team (ELT) initiated Service Round Tables in January 2013 to meet with each service at their location to discuss facility issues, strategic plans, and service-specific concerns. All employees are invited to attend their service's round table.

The round tables have since grown into successful, productive meetings that provide two-way communication in a supportive environment. "Some services have already signed up for a second round table because they've enjoyed it so much," said Ms. Jones. "People typically end the meeting by thanking leadership for putting this idea into action.



DeAnne Seekins (center), Medical Center Director, Durham VAMC, discusses plans with a group of local VA Leadership Development Institute students.

They now have a better sense of what's going on and the Director's priorities. They also appreciate being heard."

## Other Communications Efforts

RMC and Space Committee meeting agendas, minutes, and recommendations are available on the All-Employee Shared Drive, along with leadership's decisions regarding these recommendations. Minutes from other committee and council meetings are also shared if they do not violate privacy protection policies.

In addition, Ms. Seekins has encouraged Dr. McMillan to speak to services on ICARE values and other ethics concerns. For example, one service invited her to talk about improving ways to welcome new employees and prevent the spread of rumors. She has also provided overviews of the IE program.

Finally, in October 2012, the facility adopted an *Ask Leadership* program that enables any staff member to anonymously ask questions of leadership. The program yields about a dozen questions a month from staff at all levels and geographic locations. The ELT provides written responses that are shared with all staff through a monthly e-mail.

## Overall Impact

How have all these practices improved the overall ethical environment at Durham? Dr. McMillan counts many ways. "I've been here 11 years, and have seen a lot of changes. There is now a huge understanding that transparency is important and exhibiting the principles of ICARE are important. Now the environment is characterized by trust. Relationships between employees and management have definitely improved."

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Ethics Consultation Patient Materials Now Available in Spanish

In response to facility requests, the NCEHC has released Spanish-language versions of the ethics consultation brochure, poster, and flyer. The materials, which were specifically developed for patients and families, are available on the NCEHC internet at the following links:

**Brochure:**

[http://www.ethics.va.gov/docs/integratedethics/ec\\_brochure\\_spanish\\_7242013\\_custom.pdf](http://www.ethics.va.gov/docs/integratedethics/ec_brochure_spanish_7242013_custom.pdf)

**Poster:**

[http://www.ethics.va.gov/docs/integratedethics/508\\_ec\\_poster\\_862013.pdf](http://www.ethics.va.gov/docs/integratedethics/508_ec_poster_862013.pdf)

**Flyer:**

[http://www.ethics.va.gov/docs/integratedethics/508\\_ec\\_sp\\_flyer\\_862013.pdf](http://www.ethics.va.gov/docs/integratedethics/508_ec_sp_flyer_862013.pdf)

The materials are also posted on the Ethics Consultation and Education internet pages. The links are:

<http://www.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/ecc.asp>  
<http://www.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/education.asp>

The corresponding intranet links are:

<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/ecc.asp>  
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/education.asp>

For more information, contact David Alfandre, MD, IE Manager for Ethics Consultation, at [David.Alfandre@va.gov](mailto:David.Alfandre@va.gov).

### Recent Ethics Publication by VA Physician

The NCEHC congratulates Sharon Douglas, MD, FCCP, Associate Chief of Staff/Education, G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VAMC, on the recent publication of her essay in *Chest*, a peer-reviewed medical journal. To access, consult your facility's librarian.

Citation: Stewart, P.H., Agin, W.S., Douglas, S.P. (2013). "What Does the Law Say to Good Samaritans? A Review of Good Samaritan Statutes in 50 States and on US Airlines." *Chest*; 143 (6):1774-1783.

If you have published on an ethics-related topic in a newsletter, magazine, or journal, we'd like to share it with the IE community. Please contact us at [vhaethics@va.gov](mailto:vhaethics@va.gov)

### September 24 Ethics Education Teleconference:

#### Managing Conflicts Between Providers and Surrogates

NCEHC is presenting a new ethics education teleconference on September 24 at 1:00 pm EDT on managing conflicts between providers and surrogates.

The program will look at conflicts that can arise over:

- Treatment decisions at the end of life
- Unusual requests or demands by surrogates
- Surrogate behavior

The teleconference will be in a new format, and feature audio and print materials that participants can access after the call and use for staff education in their facilities.

A listserv announcement will be posted soon about how to access the program. For questions, contact Steve Tokar, NCEHC Writer-Editor, at [steve.tokar2@va.gov](mailto:steve.tokar2@va.gov)

### Practicing Procedural Justice

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training can help leaders to understand how perceptions of fairness are formed by employees and, hence, can enhance leaders' ability to act in ways that are perceived as fair by others. For instance, employees are more apt to think decisions are fair if they believe their opinions have been taken into account, and if leaders explain the logic underlying the decisions. Thus, training can also help leaders frame "bad news" in ways that are perceived by employees as fair.

Leadership training can also provide other skills for practicing fairness in real-life settings. For example, if some employees have perceived that they belong to an "out group," the leader can begin sitting with these people — instead of the leader's usual associates — at lunch. Also, leaders should endeavor to maintain their "new" leadership style by engaging in activities such as support groups where leaders can discuss with each other how to stay "on track" with applying fairness principles in day-to-day situations.

#### Procedural Justice and IntegratedEthics

Over the coming year, NCEHC will be incorporating more procedural justice concepts into tools and materials for the IE program, and we will be reviewing and disseminating resources for training leaders. Likewise, we encourage you to consider ways in which you might engage leaders at all levels of your organization to apply procedural justice concepts so that your organizational processes are more fair and, by extension, enhance your facility's overall ethical environment and culture.

<sup>1</sup>Ethics Resource Center Fellows Program, "Encouraging Employee Reporting Through Procedural Justice," n.d. <http://www.ethics.org/resource/encouraging-employee-reporting-through-procedural-justice>

<sup>2</sup>Virtanen, M., et al. Organizational justice in primary-care health centers and glycemic control in patients with type 2 diabetes. *Med Care*. 2012; 50(10): 829-30.

<sup>3</sup>Skarlicki, D.P. & Latham, G.P. "How Can Training Be Used to Foster Organizational Justice?" In J. Greenberg & J.A. Colquitt, eds. *Handbook of Organizational Justice*. New York: Psychology Press, 2005, pp. 499-522.