

Preparing for the Future

Thanks to readers like you, the Program in Medicine and Human Values has had a spectacularly successful year. The achievements of PMHV have far outstripped the vision Dr. Al Jonsen and I had in 2003. Adding Alta Bates/Summit Medical Center to our consultation service in August completed our coverage of all the Sutter Bay Area hospitals. The welcoming acceptance of our bioethics team—by doctors, nurses, patients, and administrators—represents our utility.

Our integrated bioethics program at Sutter Health would not have been possible without the contributions of visionary individuals who continued to give generously. It gave us the freedom to establish the Program and blend it into the culture of the medical staff. I am pleased to report that PMHV has achieved what every philanthropist desires from their contributions—sustainability. Sutter Health is now funding the consultation services in all eight Bay Area hospitals. Although we are unable to eliminate the ethical conundrums that present themselves in clinical medicine, we are now well prepared to tackle them. For this, we thank you.

A successful ethics consultation service is, however, just the beginning. In the course of the last 15 years, we have developed a cadre of young professionals who are becoming the new leaders in the field of Bioethics. PHMV's team, representing diverse specialties and backgrounds, is establishing best practices to resolve complex problems in patient care and help prevent them in the future. With vision and experience, they are poised to take our program in new, exciting, and important directions.

It seems that the more educational programs we provide, the greater the demand for them. We recognize that we have the opportunity to influence the next generation of physicians and healthcare providers. This year we offered more than fifty lectures, webinar sessions, and workshops, including a record number of bioethics electives and teaching sessions to physicians-in-training at CPMC and Sutter Santa Rosa. Our bioethics webinar series has been wildly successful, drawing attendees from all over Northern California, including health systems like Dignity Health and Kaiser. But, with your help, we can do more. Novel teaching methods, such as the use of visual reality to help ICU doctors learn to navigate difficult discussions at the end-of-life, present areas to innovate and explore.

Physician burnout has reached epidemic proportions among America's doctors. We recognize that a major contributing factor is "moral distress"—not being able to do what one thinks is "right." Readers of **Ethical Times** know that we are taking a proactive role with our practitioners by conducting debriefing sessions after stressful cases. We hope to do more in this area by creating an open space for doctors and nurses to share their concerns and frustrations, as well as their joys.

The third direction is most challenging. Until now, clinical ethics has, for the most part, taken place in the confines of the acute care hospital. It is time we expanded our services to a much wider group of doctors and patients—those in the outpatient world. The ethical complexities of outpatient medicine are often different and frequently more subtle. At this point, most practitioners (I am one) struggle with their moral dilemmas in private silence. The same assistance and support that we provide to doctors in the hospital needs to be tailored to the people who take care of us most of the time.

These are just three examples of how the Program in Medicine and Human Values, with your support, can continue to improve the patient experience at Sutter Health and beyond. I invite your participation as we move into the next phase of our growth and development.



William S. Andereck, M.D., FACP

▶ IN THIS ISSUE

Introduction,
Holiday Greetings **2**

Impacting Our
Community **3**



▶ If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please email us at ethics@sutterhealth.org.



Welcome our Clinical Ethics Fellow



Kelsey Gipe, Ph.D., is the 2019-2020 Program in Medicine and Human Values' Clinical Ethics Fellow. Dr. Gipe holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Maryland, College Park and a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Washington. Before joining PMHV, Dr. Gipe worked as a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at University of Maryland where she taught several philosophy courses, including a course titled **Bioethics: Regulating Right and Wrong**. Both her academic work and a clinical ethics immersion experience at MedStar Washington Hospital Center inspired her to pursue a career in clinical ethics. Her interests include vulnerable patient populations, end-of-life care, medical aid in dying, and issues of informed consent. Dr. Gipe is a member of the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities.

Our Thanks to You

From the entire Program in Medicine and Human Values team, we send a special thank you to our Ethical Times readers around the world. During this season of gratitude, we are grateful to readers like you for your encouragement and profound generosity. Your continued support is deeply appreciated. Thank you!

As we approach the close of another year, we would especially like to thank our readers and other philanthropic partners who have pledged their confidence in us with a gift to our Program. Our work would not be possible without philanthropic gifts. If you would like to make a new contribution, please do so at: **www.cpmc.org/givenow-pmhv**. No amount is too small.



*Back row: Antonio Kruger, William Andereck, Robert Fulbright.
Middle row: Kelsey Gipe, Linda Hummel, Thomasine Kushner.
Front row: Shilpa Shashidhara, Ruchika Mishra, Shaylona Kirk*

You may also contact **Emilia De Luz** at **415-600-4112** or **deluzea@sutterhealth.org** to learn about opportunities to invest in our current initiatives.

Having a Positive Impact on Our Community

RUCHIKA MISHRA, PH.D.

The Bioethics Service at the Program in Medicine and Human Values has grown tremendously over the past year. We've done a record number of ethics consultations in 2019, the highest for our Program to date. We hired two additional bioethicists to cover our expansion across the Sutter Bay Area hospitals. As we continue to build on our work, we remain focused on our goal: **To help healthcare providers, patients, and their families in challenging clinical situations.** We know that these situations are tough and we strive to be by the bedside helping our community of patients and providers benefit from our knowledge, skills, and expertise. We do this through ethics consultations, education of our providers to strengthen skills in ethical decision making, preventive ethics interventions to address potential sources of distress, and ethics related policy development to provide a consistent systems level approach to organizational issues. The testimonials below describe the impact of PMHV's Bioethics Service on patient care at different Sutter Health facilities.



Suzanne Pertsch, M.D.

*Medical Director, Palliative Care,
Co-Chair Bioethics Committee,
Mills Peninsula Health Center*

"The Bioethics Service at Mills Peninsula Health Center is a

vital support to our palliative care, ICU, specialty, and hospitalist teams in guiding difficult discussions and building consensus through partnering with patients, their families and caretakers. Through the use of highly skilled communication and consistent policy, the bioethics team minimizes unnecessary suffering and harm for us all. Ethical decision making in clinical practice is fundamental to trusting patient-physician relationships and to the safety of those in our care. Preparing patients and their loved ones for an unpredictable course of illness and appropriate care options on a backdrop of diverse cultures, beliefs, and values requires effective communication, caring, and consistency. In the context of limited benefit or non-beneficial treatments, bioethicist support is priceless."



Veronica Jordan, M.D.

*Co-Director Inpatient Medicine
Service, Santa Rosa Family
Medicine Residency Program,
Assistant Clinical Professor, UCSF*

"Our professional bioethicist has been a consistent, kind, and knowledgeable presence for the Family Medicine residents and faculty attendings on our inpatient medicine service at SSRRH. She has taught us more than just assessing a patient's capacity. She has empowered us to understand our role in that assessment, when to ask for help in tricky situations, and how to be leaders in our hospital on matters of capacity. We could not do the work we do without her."



Robert Margolin, M.D.

*Chief of Staff,
California Pacific Medical Center*

"Having served on CPMC's Ethics Committee for the past 10 years, I have been constantly impressed

with the quality of care our Ethics Service provides. In our high tech, fast-paced medical environment, we often lose track of the toll it can take on providers, patients, and families. This is particularly acute when complicated ethical issues arise. Whether it's an unrepresented patient or a question of non-beneficial treatment, I have seen firsthand how the professional bioethicists' expertise, kindness, and generosity of spirit can lift the burden of moral distress we too often encounter. I am especially proud of the work the Program in Medicine and Human Values has done to lead the development of ethics committees throughout the Sutter system."



Sutter Lakeside

Lake
COUNTY

Sonoma
COUNTY



Sutter Santa Rosa

Napa
COUNTY

Solano
COUNTY



Novato
Community

Marin
COUNTY

Contra Costa
COUNTY



Sutter Delta
Medical Center



CPMC



Alta Bates
Summit



Eden Medical
Center

Alameda
COUNTY



Mills Peninsula

PMHV Service Areas



Brandon Lee Finkbeiner, M.D.

*Hospitalist,
Sutter Lakeside Hospital*

"The Ethics Service has been able to help me best care for my patients who, due to circumstance,

don't have a voice. Situations arise that are difficult to navigate when patients are unable to express their wishes, and the bioethicist has been great at giving structure, language, and insight to build critical dialogue. Through these collaborative meetings, patients' families have been able to come to difficult decisions while feeling heard and supported, guiding them and myself to do what is right for the patient. Ethics plays an integral role and I am very thankful for their knowledgeable contributions."



Janet Essman, LCSW

*Regional Social Work Manager,
Novato Community Hospital,
Sutter Lakeside Hospital,
Sutter Santa Rosa Regional
Hospital*

The North Bay Social Work teams and the bioethicist work closely on some of the most challenging patients in the region. These issues may include patient/family dynamics, questions of capacity, end-of-life care, and patient rights. Bioethics is essential in facilitating appropriate care plans for unrepresented patients who often tend to have prolonged hospital stays due to delays in decision making that may not be in the best interest of the patient. Bioethics is often present in complex care conferences to help guide the interdisciplinary team in making sound and appropriate decisions with patient rights and wishes at the forefront of the care provided at Sutter North Bay Hospitals.

"The Bioethicist helped our family focus on our loved one's wishes, not hanging on to unlikely results and treatment he did not really want. It was a difficult and unfortunate situation, but the Bioethics Team helped ensure our family member had a peaceful passing when it was his time to go."

– Family member of Patient from Alta Bates Summit Medical Center (Ashby Campus)



Ursula Boynton, M.D.

*Chief Medical Executive,
Alta Bates Summit Medical Center*

"ABSMC is excited to have Sutter Health Bay Area's Program in Medicine and Human Values

expand the Bioethics Service to our hospital in 2019. We look forward to collaborating with PMHV to provide an effective ethics consultation service for our physicians, staff, and our patients. There are times when we face challenging ethical issues, and now we have the support of a professionally qualified bioethicist with subject matter expertise to clarify them through consultation, education, and policy development. ABSMC is proud to have this new resource to access when we face complex decisions in difficult situations, a common occurrence in healthcare."

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
San Francisco, CA
Permit No. 1741

**PROGRAM IN MEDICINE
& HUMAN VALUES**

2324 Sacramento St.
San Francisco, CA 94115

Tel 415-600-1647
Fax 415-600-1355
Hotline 415-600-3991

sutterhealth.org/bioethics

Email: ethics@sutterhealth.org

Ruchika Mishra, Ph.D.
Program Director

William Andereck, M.D., FACP
Medical Director

Robert Fulbright, J.D., M.A.
Bioethicist

Kelsey Gipe, Ph.D.
Clinical Ethics Fellow

Steve Heilig, MPH
Public Affairs Specialist

Linda Hummel, Ph.D.
Program Supervisor

Albert Jonsen, Ph.D.
Bioethics Scholar Emeritus

Shaylona Kirk, M.D.
Bioethicist

Antonio Kruger
Administrator

Thomasine Kushner, Ph.D.
Neuroethicist

Shilpa Shashidhara, Ph.D.
Bioethicist