

## Introduction to Ethics

Ethics is part of life. Ethics is about reflecting on our values and how they impact our decisions. Our values inform how we care for others.

At Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) we strive to live our values by:

- treating people fairly
- removing barriers to accessing health services
- respecting patients' privacy
- supporting informed decision-making
- communicating effectively
- making sure the hospital is a safe place for all

Patients, families and healthcare teams make ethical decisions on a daily basis. But sometimes the right choice isn't clear.

### You may be facing an ethical issue if:

- You are feeling stuck or confused about the right thing to do.
- You feel caught between different values or goals.
- You are worried about possible harms or risks.

When you have a question or concern, the first step is to speak with your health care team. However, if you need further help with an ethical issue, please contact the appropriate service described below.

You can learn more about ethics at Hamilton Health Sciences at: [hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/ethics](https://hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/ethics)



## Research Ethics Board

HHS is a research hospital. Health research at HHS may involve patients, their families and caregivers, as well as university students, hospital staff, and people in the general community.

A Research Ethics Board (REB) must review all research at HHS before it can begin. The REB is responsible for ensuring the rights, safety and well-being of research participants. Research at HHS may be reviewed by the Hamilton Integrated Research Ethics Board (HiREB), or it might be reviewed by another qualified REB.

### Common situations where the research ethics board can help include:

- you have questions or concerns about a study but want to talk to someone who is not directly involved
- you have questions about your rights as a research participant

## Contact

The consent form (sometimes called an information sheet) will have the name and contact information for the REB for your study.

If in doubt, you can contact the Office of the HiREB Chair:

**PHONE** 905-521-2100 ext. 42013

PD 10100 (2023-06)

## Guiding Patients and Families Through Decisions and Concerns

Resources at Hamilton Health Sciences to Address Ethical Issues





## Ethics Consultation Service

The Ethics Consultation Service helps to resolve uncertainty or conflicts about patient care. The Ethics Consultation Service offers a neutral place to enable people to reflect on the situation, the options, their values, and consider what is best for the patient.

Any member of the health care team, **including patients and families**, may contact the Ethics Consultation Service for support.

### Common situations where Ethics Consultants can help include:

- › you are uncertain how to make the right decisions for yourself or your loved one
- › you are unclear about whether a patient has capacity to make his/her own decisions
- › you feel caught between different opinions about which care or discharge plan is best
- › you find yourself in conflict with your healthcare team

## Contact

**PHONE** 905-521-2100 ext. 76443  
and ask to page the Ethics Consultant on call; they will call back shortly

**EMAIL** [officeofethics@hhsc.ca](mailto:officeofethics@hhsc.ca)



## Office of Patient Experience

The Patient Experience Team provides leadership and support to promote an excellent patient/family experience. Our office works with patients and families who may have compliments, questions or concerns about the care or service received in hospital.

### Common situations where Patient Experience can help include:

- › you want to share a compliment about your experience
- › you want to voice a concern about your care or service
- › you would like to share feedback on ways to improve your health care experience or overall hospital processes
- › you would like to provide advice on addressing patient safety issues
- › you want to inquire about being a Patient or Family Advisor

## Contact

**PHONE** 905-521-2100 ext. 75240

**EMAIL** [patientexperience@hhsc.ca](mailto:patientexperience@hhsc.ca)

**MAIL** Hamilton Health Sciences  
Attention: Patient Experience  
100 King Street West  
P.O. Box 2000  
L8N 3Z5



## Privacy & Freedom of Information Office

The Privacy and Freedom of Information Office provides advice and guidance to patients, families and our staff about our information management practice. We work with patients and families to address any concerns regarding privacy.

### Common situations where the Office of Privacy and Freedom of Information can help include:

#### For personal health information:

- › you would like to restrict access to your personal health information
- › you suspect someone has accessed your personal health information inappropriately

#### For corporate or other information:

- › you would like to know if you can access information about HHS' business or other records

## Contact

**PHONE** 905-521-2100  
ext. 75122 - Privacy Office  
ext. 75126 - Freedom of Information Office

**EMAIL** [privacy@hhsc.ca](mailto:privacy@hhsc.ca)  
[FOI@hhsc.ca](mailto:FOI@hhsc.ca)

Note: Please do not email personal health information to or from external email addresses.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**  
[www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/patients-visitors/privacy](http://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/patients-visitors/privacy)