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Atikokan General Hospital Ethics Framework

Purpose

The Ethical Framework is the guiding philosophy which shapes the moral duty and obligations of the organization. Ethical practice is essential in building and maintaining public, physician and staff confidence and is a key factor in quality governance. The Atikokan General Hospital (AGH) is committed to ethical decision making and recognizes the importance of established structures, principals and procedures to guide governance, leadership, management and staff in this process.

Policy Oversight

The Chief Executive Oversight is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented and reviewed regularly.

The AGH Ethics Committee (See Appendix A for the Terms of Reference) is responsible for addressing referrals and providing objective recommendations following the Ethical Framework identified in this policy.

Policy

Our Code of Ethics is based upon our mission/vision/value statements. AGH recognizes that the needs, values and preferences of the person receiving care will be the primary consideration in the provision of quality health care.

The AGH values resonate in the organizational Code of Ethics, fostering an environment in which ethical behavior is the norm and an expectation of all employees, physicians, volunteers, students and associated affiliates to “do the right thing”.

The Hospital maintains mechanisms to address and resolve patient, personnel and management conflicts. Sound ethical decision making will be done using a consultative team-based approach. If involving a client; the client, family and substitute decision maker must be kept involved in the process.

The following Code of Ethics is also supported by other hospital documentation such as: Ethical Guideline Reference Binder, Code of Conduct Policy, Confidential policy, Staff Concerns/Complaints Policy, Whistle Blowing Policy and Patients Rights and Responsibilities Policy.

Person-Centered Care Principles

The AGH Ethics Framework is rooted in principles of Person-Centered Care

Written by:		Approved by (sign.):	
Reviewed by:		Approved by (name):	
Reviewed on:		Approved on:	
Renewed by:	Bridget Davidson	Revision Date:	2025-03-15
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Respecting the Individual

It is important to get to know the patient as a person and recognise their unique qualities. They have their own personal values, beliefs, boundaries and perspectives. It is vital to not only understand these aspects of the person but to also respect them and incorporate them into the care plan.

Treating People with Dignity

This involves communicating with the patient in a respectful way, listening to what they have to say and taking on board their input. It also means maintaining their dignity and avoiding embarrassment or shaming.

Understanding their Experiences and Goals

To create a successful long-term care plan it is important to know the patient's life experience, their present state and their goals for the future. This will help you gain a deeper understanding of the individual and allow you to further tailor the care.

Maintaining Confidentiality

As with any other method of care, confidentiality must be maintained where appropriate. Not only for the patient's well-being, but to also build trust and create a productive relationship. This principle may be approached by establishing with the individual what information they want to be shared with the friends, family or other professionals.

Giving Responsibility

A person-centred care approach helps the patient to perform as many everyday activities by themselves as they can. This is important for encouraging the development of the patient's skills and creating more confidence in the journey to recovery. Although in this approach the persons boundaries must be recognised and not pushed too far.

Coordinating Care

To make recovery as smooth and productive as possible all medical staff should be coordinating the treatment being given to the individual. This is especially relevant for those receiving many different types of care, as an unorganised plan can cause confusion, stress, anxiety or a set back in recovery.

Other Ethical Principles

- Organizational activity and decision making are conducted with integrity through the professional behavior of administrative, clinical and support personnel at all levels of the organization.
- Effective internal and external communication is accomplished with courtesy, respect, consideration and positive interpersonal and collaborative relationships.
- Privacy and confidentiality of information, related to the people and activities associated with our organization, is sustained with the highest level of importance.

- The care provided by our organization is applied with dignity, compassion, equality, safety and professional competence.
- Our promotion of optimal health and well-being is designed to meet diverse physical, mental, cultural and social requirements of our clients, our workplaces and our community.
- The Atikokan General Hospital exercises accountability to those we serve through quality performance management of resources; ongoing knowledge exchange of best practices; implementation of policies and regulations; and observance of medical and technical professional codes of conduct.

Potential Ethical Issues

Any issue having the potential to result in an outcome disrespecting the values or principles of the organization, the person or the profession, can be defined as an ethical issue. Ethical issues can occur in the business or clinical areas of the organization, where the actions of a group or individual lead to an outcome which questions the “good” of the intention. Some examples of ethical related issues include:

- Conflict of interest
- Non-compliance with Code of Ethics
- Confidentiality
- Promotional activities
- Personal Gain
- Resource allocation
- Consent
- Death and dying
- Research
- Disclosure
- Uncertainty – not sure what is the right thing to do

Ethical Decision Making

Ethical decision making is about “doing the right thing” or “doing good” when faced with a dilemma or issue requiring a decision to be made.

The following five questions provide a quick personal check to validate the ethical foundation of your actions on a day to day basis:

- 1) Is my information **based on facts**? Do I have all the information?
- 2) Is it **fair** to all concerned in short and long term? Promotes win-win.
- 3) Is it **legal**? Does it **adhere** to organizational policies, provincial regulations and laws?
- 4) What would my **licensing body** expect from me?
- 5) How will it make me feel about myself? Will it make me feel proud? Will I make the same recommendation or decision if my family knew about it or if published in newspaper / social media?

PROCEDURE**Staff Guidelines for Advancing Ethical Issues:**

- 1) Discuss any ethical issues with Department Manager.
- 2) Managers will forward to management team for decision if requiring ethics consultation.
- 3) If requested, Ethics Committee will meet with those involved to gather facts/discuss issue.
- 4) Consultation with the Centre for Health Care Ethics may be initiated to facilitate and advise on unresolved / complicated ethical dilemma.
- 5) Outside resources will be sought as required i.e. Thunder Bay Regional Ethicist and Ethics Board.
- 6) Once a recommendation is decided on, the Ethics Committee responds in writing addressed to the CEO.
- 7) The decision is shared to management and staff involved, including to all staff and relevant partners to encourage learning and increase awareness on ethical considerations. Information shared to the general stakeholders is de-identified.

Ethical Decision-Making Framework - Administration

- 1) Identify and Clarify Ethical Issue:
 - a. What is the dilemma?
 - b. What makes this an ethical issue?
- 2) Identify Stakeholders:
 - a. Who is involved?
 - b. Who will it impact and how will it impact indirect stakeholders?
 - c. Who should be part of the decision making?
 - d. Who has vested interest in the process or outcome?
 - e. What are the stakeholder input/expectations?
- 3) Gather and Examine Relevant Information:
 - a. What is the history of the situation?
 - b. What are the relevant facts? (e.g. who, what, where, etc.)
 - c. Who are the individuals or groups affected? (e.g. institutions, organizations, societies, public at large)
 - d. Who are the health care providers involved?
 - e. What is the classification & quantification of risk: perceived, theoretical, evidence-based?
 - f. What tools are going to be used to analyze the problem?
- 4) Brainstorm Solutions:
 - a. What are all the possible solutions?
 - b. Are there similar situations from the past?
 - c. Is there any potential for violation of anyone's rights?
 - d. Have you considered consultation? (e.g. Health Ethics Committee)

- 5) Analyze Potential Courses of Action:
 - a. Review CHA code of Ethics, Ethical Principles in Health Care & any relevant Professional Code of Ethics.
 - b. What is the rationale for the identified solutions?
 - c. What are the potential short-term, long-term consequence (i.e. benefits, harms and inconveniences) of each alternative action/inaction?
 - d. Identify relevant legal, institutional constraints, issues.
 - e. How are the options impacting stakeholders?

- 6) Decide on Recommendation
 - a. What are the values & ethical principles underlying choice?
 - b. Is the chosen response option consistent with institutional core values?
 - c. What are the supporting points or policies influencing the final choice?
 - d. What is your confidence level with the response chosen?

- 7) Plan for Implementation
 - a. Develop a plan for implementation.
 - b. Who should be consulted and informed?
 - c. What actions are needed to assure the decision achieves its intended outcome?
 - d. What resources may be needed to accomplish the plan?
 - e. How could the plan go wrong? What can we do to avoid this? *Ethics Framework*

- 8) Share the Decision
 - a. Communicate decision to appropriate individuals/groups.
 - b. As appropriate, identify opportunities for education and collaboration.

- 9) Evaluate Process and Outcomes
 - a. Develop policies, recommendations.
 - b. Monitor outcomes.
 - c. Follow up. Did the decision maximize benefits, reduce harm, and treat all parties fairly?

Communication

The Ethics Framework will be accessible to staff in the Administration Policies. Information regarding ethical decision making will be disseminated through management meetings and department meetings.

Policy Review

The CEO and the Ethics Committee are responsible for reviewing this policy and framework, at least every two years, or as needed. The Committee will also regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the framework as used in the organization, in consultation with stakeholders.

References

AJ Case Management. Retrieved on February 14, 2023 from

<https://ajcasemanagement.com/person-centred-care-principles-definitions-examples/>

Cumberland Health Authority Ethical Framework

North of Superior Healthcare Group

AGH Ethical Framework

1. Identify and Clarify Ethical Issue

2. Identify Stakeholders

3. Gather and Examine Relevant Information

4. Brainstorm Solutions

5. Analyze Potential Courses of Action



6. Decide on Recommendation

Ethical Principles

- ✓ Promote freedom of choice
- ✓ Do no harm
- ✓ Be truthful
- ✓ Do or promote good

Considerations

- ✓ Organizational Values
- ✓ Social/Cultural Expectations
- ✓ Legal Requirements
- ✓ Professional Code of Ethics

8. Plan for Implementation

7. Share the Decision

9. Evaluate Process and Outcomes

