Using an Interdisciplinary Team Meeting Approach to Ethics Consultation

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Ethics consultation in a hospital or other healthcare facility should not be limited solely to the work of ethics consultants. Instead, the process should include a team of healthcare professionals across all aspects of the patient’s care in order to have the most thorough analysis of the situation. Nursing professionals are particularly important to this process. It is the bedside nurse, as well as the unit nurse manager, who have more information about the day to day and hour to hour status of the patient, including the patient’s physical, psychological, social, and spiritual condition. These nurses also work closely with the physicians to get a clearer and accurate understanding of the care plans being recommended for the patient. Using a team meeting approach to ethics consultation and relying on the input of all caregivers, including nurses, the ethics service of a facility can more clearly work towards preventive ethics and overall improved education within the facility.

Using the Integrated Ethics model established by the VA, it can be established that including all disciplines of healthcare in the consultation process can improve the ethics culture and environment of a facility. This integration can also better enable the various specialists to identify and even address potential future ethical conflicts before a full consultation may be needed. This preventive measure can improve the overall ethics quality of the services rendered in a facility.