

Community Care Northumberland Ethics Program

Current achievements, and future directions

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Central East
Regional Ethics Network



CommunityCare
NORTHUMBERLAND

Objectives

- Review components of the Ethics Program
- Present trend data of Program activities for the period of: 1st April, 2024 – 31st March, 2025
- Future directions and considerations



Ethics at CCN

- Community Care Northumberland (CCN) recently made the decision to partner with the **Central East Regional Ethics Network (CEREN)** for access to professional health-care ethics services. The services are provided on an as-needed basis.
- The CEREN is based on previous work with the Champlain Centre for Health Care Ethics (Ottawa – <http://champlainethics.ca/>) to develop a coordinated, regional approach to health-care ethics support.
- The CEREN provides CCN access to:

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| • Clinical and organizational ethics consultations | • Ethics-related policy review |
| • Regularly-scheduled ethics education | • Support for Accreditation compliance of ethics-related standards if initiated/desired |

- Anyone, at any time, may access the Ethicist: ethics@commcare.ca



Ethics Framework

An Ethics Framework

“Provides a standardized approach to work through ethical issues. It guides behaviour and decision making and takes into consideration staff, client, and family perspectives. The framework may include values, codes of conduct, guidelines, criteria, processes, and other mechanisms to guide discussion and decision making about ethical issues. It also helps care providers recognize their moral responsibility and provides them with support to reflect on ethical issues they encounter.”



ACCREDITATION
CANADA

- Accreditation Canada, Leadership Standards (1.2.1)



“Big-E” Ethics Framework

- Ethics Strategy & Infrastructure:
 - *Clear accountability* in organizational structure and aligned with the MVV and strategic directions
 - *Designated personnel* with formal responsibility for ethics
 - *Tools, policies, and processes* to guide ethical decision-making
 - *Education & training*



“Little-e” ethics framework

- A pragmatic device to aid decision-making
 - “frame” the decision-making problem
 - aid deliberation about solutions
 - make relevant values, principles or issues explicit



“Ethical decision-making framework”

IDEA + A4R



CCN Ethics Strategy and Processes

CCN's formal Ethics Strategy and Processes are outlined in two key documents:

1. The Ethics work plan

- i. Provides high-level direction for the Ethics Program at CCN
- ii. Regularly reviewed and updated by the Ethicist and Director of Hospice Services

2. The Integrated Ethics Framework

- i. Outlines accountability for ethics at CCN, and key information such as how to request an ethics consultation.
- ii. Articulates a clear process for addressing ethical issues via consultation with the ethicist, and
- iii. Provides decision-making tools (frameworks) for working through ethical issues – the IDEA, and the Accountability for Reasonableness (A4R) frameworks.

In addition to the above documents, principle-based care and decision making is frequently facilitated via strong collaboration between the Ethicist and Director of Hospice Services, where engagement of the ethicist in ethical issues is regularly championed.

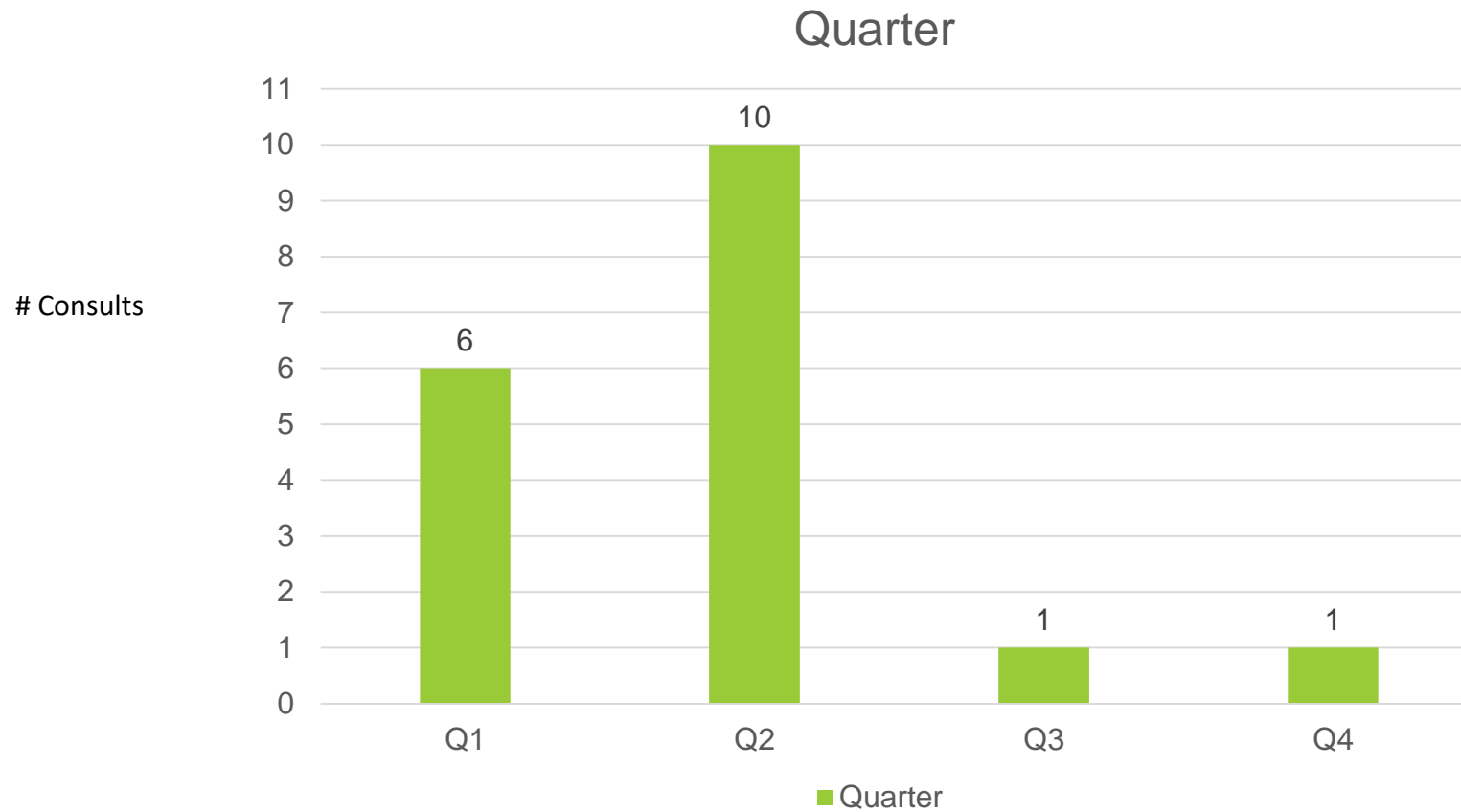


Key Ethics Program Activities

1. Ethics Consultation
2. Ethics Education and Capacity Building
3. Other Activities (e.g. Organizational support)



Ethics Consultations



N = 18



Ethics Consultation Requestor & Issues

Requested by:

1. Director (11)
2. Clinical Manager (2)
3. Manager (2)
4. Volunteer (1)
5. Other (2)

Issues:

1. Privacy and confidentiality (5)
2. Discharge planning (4)
3. Human Resources (3)
4. Other (6)
 - Staff/client safety, MAID, Access to care, Conflict of interest, Consent, Mandatory vaccination.

N=18



Timeliness of Ethics Consultations

Time to Initial Response

1. Same day (18)
2. Next day (0)
3. 2 days (0)
4. 3 days (0)
5. 4+ days (0)

Time to First Encounter

1. Same day (14)
2. Next day (0)
3. 2 days (0)
4. 3 days (1)
5. 4+ days (3)

N=18

- Initial response to request for ethics consultations were provided on the same day in 100% of requests.

* "Encounter" here means an expected dialogue, scheduled meeting, or consultation which gathers information and proposes possible options or ways forward. In some cases, the first response and first encounter are the same event.



Education & Capacity Building

- Access to monthly Regional Ethics Rounds
 - 8 Sessions per year, topics included:
 - HHR Challenges and Moral Distress, Living at Risk, Advance Care Planning, and others.
- Targeted sessions included:
 - Ethics Framework and decision making capacity, Managing relationships, Privacy and confidentiality (“Circle of care”) x2, Case reviews
- Sharing of ethics resources (framework and tri-fold / tabletop card) for staff awareness of ethics resources, in hospice and community settings.



Other Organizational Activities

- Development and ongoing maintenance of ethics program and work plan with Director of Hospice Services
- Support of leadership team at monthly Director's Meetings
- Numerous policy/document review, including: Consent to service, Philosophy of care agreement, Accountability for Reasonableness worksheet, Nut free policy, Bereavement consent, Immunization policy, and others.



Future Directions

- Continually assess organizational needs, and explore gaps in services or ethical practice
- Continue to work on integration of ethics at CCN (in community, and within the Hospice), and awareness of staff of the resources available.
- Provide additional opportunities for staff to reflect on and discuss ethical issues (e.g. Drop-in sessions with the Ethicist)
- Explore additional opportunities for consultation and engagement (e.g. regular policy review, resource allocation in budget preparations, added support of the governing body, and others) with not only Ed's House, but CCN on the whole.
- Maintain the ethics program and continue to meet or exceed best practice related to ethics.



Contact Information

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