Community Care Northumberland Ethics Program

Current achievements, and future directions

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Objectives

- Review components of the Ethics Program

- Present trend data of Program activities for the period of: 1st August, 2023 – 31st March, 2024

- 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:

• 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, 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.
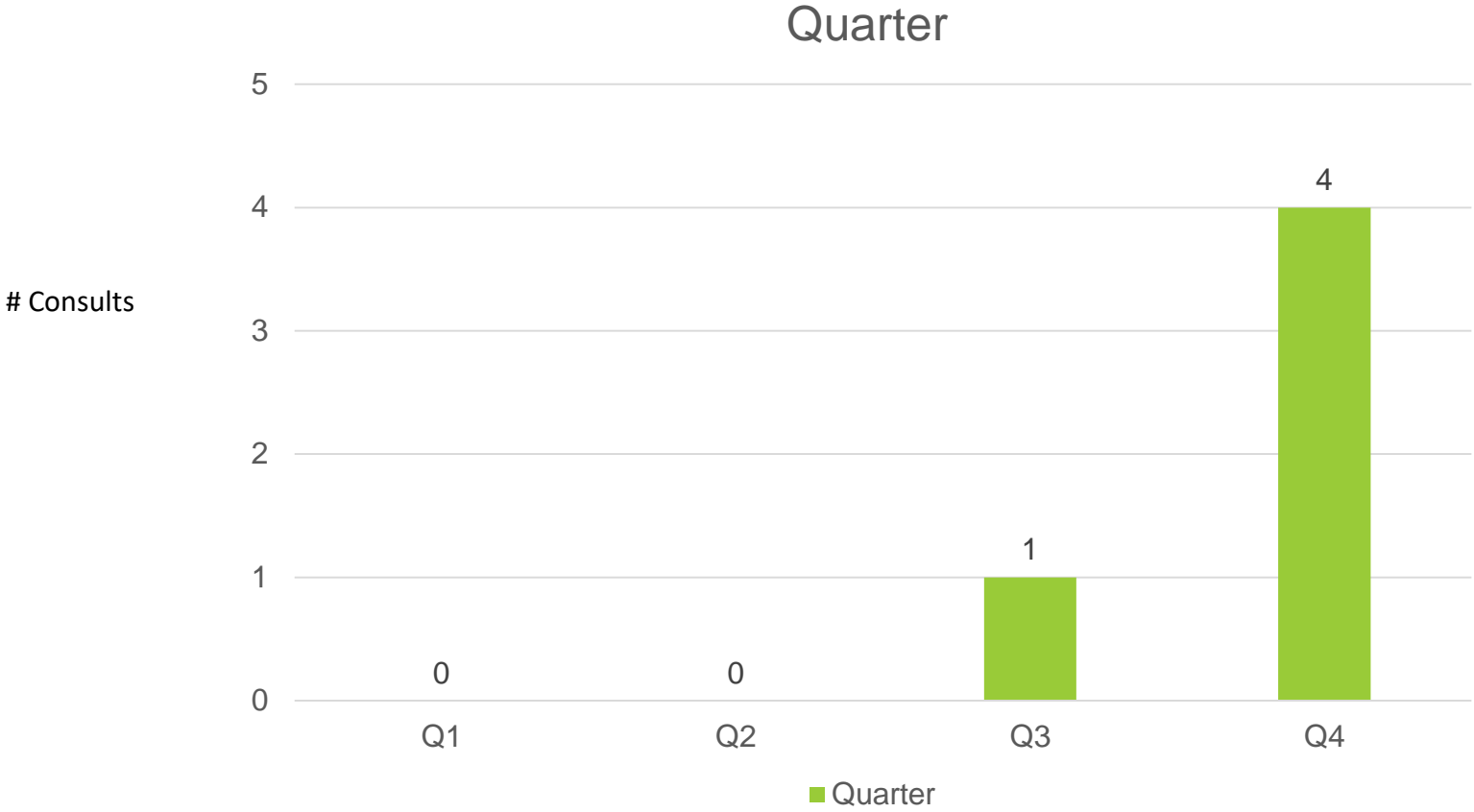
Key Ethics Program Activities

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

Ethics Consultations

NB: The CCN – CEREN partnership was not initiated until mid-Q2

Ethics Consultation Requestor & Issues

Requested by:

1. Director (3)
2. Manager (2)

Issues: N=5

1. Consent and capacity (1)
2. Privacy and confidentiality (1)
3. Conflict of interest (1)
4. Human Resources (1)
5. Role definition and setting expectations (1)

Timeliness of Ethics Consultations

Time to Initial Response

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

Time to First Encounter   N=5

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

- Initial response to request for ethics consultation and time to first encounter 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:
    - Medicalization of death, Consent and capacity, Moral distress, Professional boundaries, Futility, Brain death and organ donation, among others.
- Targeted sessions included:
  - Ethics and Governance
  - Boundaries and Volunteers
- Preparations for CCN Ethics Framework and Case study presentation (April 2024)
- Development of physical materials (tri-fold / tabletop card) for staff awareness of ethics resources.
- Ethics contribution to newsletter
- Development of Ethics Resource learning module for staff

Other Organizational Activities

- Review of existing documentation and infrastructure related to ethics at onboarding

- Development and ongoing maintenance of ethics program and work plan with Director of Hospice Services

- Policy/document review, including the Client Relations and MAiD policies, as well as development of the new *Integrated Ethics Framework*.

- Development of material for organizational webpage, and creation of dedicated ethics e-mail address (ethics@commcare.ca)

Future Directions

- Continually assess organizational needs, and explore gaps in services or ethical practice

- Continue to work on integration of ethics at CCN, and awareness of staff of the resources available.

- Explore additional opportunities for clinical and organizational 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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