

Bioethics Bulletin

December 18, 2024

CENTER FOR PRACTICAL
BIOETHICS

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We Need YOUR HELP in Situations Like This

2024 TRUE STORY:

Laura had been on and off hospice for a year. Now hospitalized and nonresponsive, her doctors suggest a feeding tube. Her advance directive said to do nothing, but her adult children are uncertain. CPB Bioethicist [Ryan Pferdehirt](#) receives a message from the attending physician.

“We need you in this patient’s room.”

Ryan listens to Laura’s children and then asks: “Why do you want a feeding tube?”

“We don’t want her to be hungry.”

“It’s not like that,” Ryan explains. “Your mother’s brain knows what’s going on and will not prioritize hunger.”

After 30 minutes of conversation, the family decides to change code status to comfort only. Laura died soon after with her children – now at peace with their decision – by her side.

**With your support,
we respond to hundreds of cases like Laura's every year.**

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Nonprofits are Critical to Civil Society

Is change accelerating? It's a question that's difficult to answer with certainty, but many seem to perceive we are in a period of transition and transformation. To close out 2024, [James Stowe](#), President and CEO of the Center, explains why he believes nonprofits will play a special role in in this period and why their value should be recognized, upheld and defended.

“Relying on government or corporations to take on the role nonprofits play would mean sacrificing community-driven solutions for bureaucratic red tape or profit-driven priorities,” he explains. “Nonprofits ensure that solutions remain rooted in the people they serve, not external agendas.”

Dr. Stowe describes several high-value nonprofits where he serves as a volunteer, and why he is filled with gratitude for every donation you make to the Center.

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Ethics Dispatch

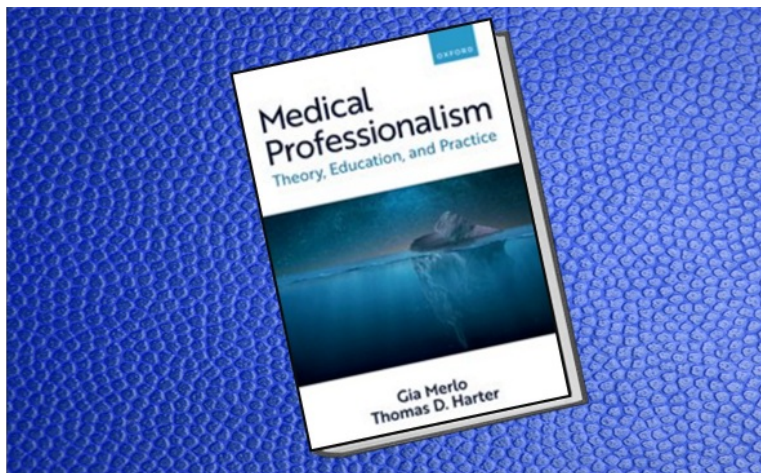
Passing the Torch: Why Mentorship Is Essential in Bioethics

Bioethics and clinical ethics build on previous knowledge and experience. They cannot be learned from books alone; they must be experienced to be truly understood and practiced, particularly with respect to clinical ethics consultation.

Knowledge, methodologies and approaches in this field are passed down through academic generations via colleagues and friendships. Most importantly, however, bioethics requires mentorship. Fortunately, many bioethics programs offer fellowships and mentorships that are designed to address this need.

In this issue of the *Ethics Dispatch*, the “Hot Topic” presents three reasons why mentorship in bioethics is crucial. Under “Ethical Musings,” Dr. Ryan Pferderhirt, Vice President of Ethics Services, offers a tribute to his mentor, Terry Rosell. Dr. Rosell, the Rosemary Flanigan Chair at the Center, is retiring at the end of this year after 20 years of service.

[READ THE DISPATCH](#)



Pre-Order Your Copy Medical Professionalism: Theory, Education, and Practice

The Center is proud to announce the soon-to-be-publication of a book – [Medical Practice: Theory, Education, and Practice](#) – which includes a chapter by our Vice President of Ethics Services, Ryan Pferdehirt, D.Bioethics, HEC-C, and Brian S. Carter, MD, Neonatal/Perinatal Medicine, Bioethics, Children’s Mercy Kansas City.

Drs. Pferdehirt and Carter’s chapter discusses the need for professionals to acknowledge and accommodate a certain distance between themselves as well-educated and highly trained specialists that hold an element of power in being the gatekeepers of healthcare. They emphasize the role of empathy in accomplishing real communication with the vulnerable, ill or dying patient and the patient’s family.

Edited by Gia Merlo and Thomas D. Harter, the book, published by Oxford University Press, will ship on January 31, 2025.

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