

BIOETHICS & HUMANITIES NEWSLETTER



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WELCOME...

Welcome to the monthly Bioethics and Humanities Newsletter provided by the Program in Bioethics and Humanities at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine.

Program in Bioethics and Humanities: *Our Mission*

We are committed to helping healthcare professionals explore and understand the increasingly complex ethical questions that have been brought on by advances in medical technology and the health care system. We achieve this through education, research, and service within the Carver College of Medicine, University of Iowa Health Care, University of Iowa, and the wider Iowa community.

[More Details About
The Program](#)

ETHICS IN HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE

Friday, May 29, 2026 | 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Medical Education Research Facility (MERF)
Carver College of Medicine, University of Iowa



SESSION ONE

*The Moral Calibration of Professional Duty: How Responsible Am I
for My Patient's Wellbeing?*

Aaron Kunz, DO, MA, MME



SESSION TWO

*Between Patient, Parent, and Professional: A Framework for Ethical
Pediatric Decision-Making*

Erica Salter, PhD, HEC-C



SESSION THREE

AI and the Patient-Clinician Relationship

Adam Cifu, MD



SESSION FOUR

Frequently Used Resources and References in Clinical Ethics Consultation

Rebecca Benson, MD, PhD

Intended Audience:

Administrators, Attorneys, Chaplains, Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, Physicians, Physician Assistants,
Social Workers, Students, Trainees, and Others

**Scan the QR code for full conference
details and a link to registration.**



Space is limited to 60 attendees, please register early.

HUMANITIES CORNER



This month's spotlight is on **Miquela Teske, a fourth year medical student**. Her creative work is a haiku and written reflection. She completed this creative work as part of the *Ethics and Humanities Sub-Internship Seminar*. During this Seminar students are asked to complete a written reflection or creative work that responds to a situation they encountered during their sub-internship that illustrated values in ethics, professionalism, or humanism.

Healing mechanisms
Fortress of novelty, price
Justice for patients

I cared for a patient with persistent atrial fibrillation. After years of trying numerous medications, her heart was still in an irregularly irregular rhythm with poor response. A newer, more pricey medication was the next medication to try. We attempted to prescribe the medication just to be faced with denial from the insurance company, and out of pocket payment was not a feasible option for our patient. Despite our appeals, the insurance company refused to cover the medication. We were left to prescribe a regimen of medications she had already failed.

We have simple, intricate, lifesaving medications, procedures, and surgeries. [healing mechanisms]. But if they cannot be accessed by those who need them most, what is the point? [fortress of novelty, price]. We swear an oath to care for and treat our patients to the best of our ability, but systemic factors sometimes prevent us from doing so. Our patients deserve access to effective therapies. [justice for patients].

BIOETHICS IN THE LITERATURE

- ⇒ Affdal A, Bujold M, Ravitsky V. Oncofertility in prepubertal girls: A qualitative study of Canadian and French pediatric oncologists' perspectives on ovarian tissue cryopreservation. [J Law Med Ethics](#). 2025 Nov 6: 1-8.
- ⇒ Ayton A, Ibrahim A, Solmi M, Bulik CM, van Furth EF, Mehler PS, et al. Addressing the false dichotomy between autonomy and preservation of life: Clinical, legal, and ethical considerations in severe and longstanding anorexia nervosa. [Int J Law Psychiatry](#). 2025 Nov 29; 105: 102179.
- ⇒ Ballantyne JC, Koob GF. Why opioids stop working for pain: No free ride in the brain. [Ann Intern Med](#). 2025 Dec 9. [Epub ahead of print]

“Clinical data from the period of overprescribing revealed a lack of efficacy and safety for long-term opioids, and our current understanding of tolerance, neuroadaptation, and opponent process effects go a long way toward explaining the deterioration of analgesic efficacy and safety with continuous opioid use.”

(Ballantyne and Koob)

- ⇒ Chatham AH, Balch JA, Hong P, Baskaran N, Manganiello L, Abbott KL, et al. Honoring advance directives: A scoping review of adherence and impact on value of care. [J Palliat Med](#). 2025 Nov; 28: 1524-1531.
- ⇒ Crowley R, Beachy MW, Carr PW. Principles of managed care: A position paper from the American College of Physicians. [Ann Intern Med](#). 2025 Nov 25. [Epub ahead of print]

“Managed care is now the dominant form of health coverage in the United States despite mixed evidence of its ability to improve outcomes. Too often, managed care plans erect barriers to contain costs, leading to delayed or forgone care and frustration among patients and physicians.”

(Crowley et al.)

- ⇒ Forsdyke J. Well-being, pain and the mere-difference view of disability. [Bioethics](#). 2025 Nov; 39: 796-801.
- ⇒ Gunkel J, Miller FG. Xenotransplantation: Injustice, harm, and alternatives for addressing the organ crisis. [Hastings Cent Rep](#). 2025 Sep-Oct; 55: 7-17.
- ⇒ Hofmann B, Han PKJ. Bearing the burdens of medical uncertainty. [J Eval Clin Pract](#). 2025 Dec; 31: e70323.

BIOETHICS IN THE LITERATURE (CONTINUED)

- ⇒ Launer J. John Launer: We need humility to engage with AI. [BMJ](#). 2025 Nov 19; 391: r2242.

“... we’re going to need humility in engaging with AI. We should all acquire the skills and confidence to prompt AI programs to perform as well as they can. We must expect that patients and learners will come to us wanting added value, over and above what their smartphones have already offered them. From now on we’ll have to see ourselves as partners in a permanent three way alliance: ourselves, AI, and the people we treat or teach.”

(Launer)

- ⇒ MacDuffie KE, Ackerman SL, Cadigan RJ, Goldenberg AJ, Lemke AA, McNamera KC, et al. Should a genomic diagnosis be a ticket or a roadmap? Threats to equity in the pursuit of developmental services in early childhood. [Am J Bioeth](#). 2025 Dec; 25: 32-40.
- ⇒ Pallisé Perelló C, Inguaggiato G, van Eck L, de Jong HK, Hermans SM, Grobusch MP, et al. Research ethics and integrity challenges in accelerated clinical trials, an interview study. [BMC Med Ethics](#). 2025 Nov 26; 26: 165.
- ⇒ Palmieri S, Robertson CT, Cohen IG. New guidance on responsible use of AI. [JAMA](#). 2025 Dec 3. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Reddy S, Padmanabhan S, Overgaard S. AI in the doctor-patient encounter. [BMJ](#). 2025 Nov 18; 391: r2344.

“Healthcare institutions and regulatory bodies face the challenge of governing rapidly evolving AI systems while ensuring patient safety and maintaining clinical standards. Persistent concerns over design quality, accuracy, liability, and privacy necessitate robust safeguards and stronger oversight before tools are widely adopted.¹⁶ Without coordinated regulation, market incentives rather than clinical need will shape adoption....”

(Reddy et al.)

- ⇒ Rodríguez-Arias D, Martínez-López MV, Espericueta L, Díaz-Cobacho G, Gross JA, Delgado J. Organ donation after medical aid in dying: An ethical overview. [Bioethics](#). 2025 Nov 26. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Rosenbaum L. The concierge cure? [N Engl J Med](#). 2025 Oct 30; 393: 1746-1750.
- ⇒ Rushton CH, Swoboda SM, Reller N, Sarver LC, Wright EM, Hudson KW, et al. Conceptual model and design of an initiative to build nurses' resilience and ethical practice. [J Prof Nurs](#). 2025 Nov-Dec; 61: 33-40.

BIOETHICS IN THE LITERATURE (CONTINUED)

- ⇒ Sadler AG, Mengeling MA, Cook BL, Torner JC, Vander Weg M, Hamilton AB, et al. Development of a patient decision aid to prevent firearm suicide among US women Reserve and National Guard Veterans. [J Gen Intern Med](#). 2025 Nov 13. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Schiff JC, Saxena M, Ziegler M, Burgart AM. Pregnancy testing without consent in the emergency department. [JAMA](#). 2025 Dec 15. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Thornton A. Troubling hope: Religious faith and false hope in clinical research participants. [Ethics Hum Res](#). 2025 Nov-Dec; 47: 26-36.
- ⇒ Wang Y, Federman A, Wurtz H, Manchester MA, Morgado L, Scipion CEA, et al. The evolving literature on the ethics of artificial intelligence for healthcare: A PRISMA scoping review. [Front Digit Health](#). 2025; 7: 1701419.
- ⇒ Watts G, Otlowski M, Banks R, Newson AJ. Three ethical approaches to expanding newborn screening through genomics: A critical comparative analysis. [BMC Med Ethics](#). 2025 Nov 27; 26: 167.



BIOETHICS IN THE NEWS

- ⇒ My patient was gone. I had to help his family see it. [STAT News](#), December 15, 2025.
- ⇒ STAT readers respond to essays on miracles, vaccines, and more. [STAT News](#), December 13, 2025.
- ⇒ Gov. Pritzker signs bill making Illinois 12th state to allow physician-assisted suicide. [WGN 9](#), December 12, 2025.
- ⇒ Should you be able to ask a doctor to help you die? [The New York Times](#), December 9, 2025.
- ⇒ AI isn't the solution for every problem. [MedPage Today](#), December 8, 2025.
- ⇒ Putting pig organs in people is OK in the US, but growing human organs in pigs is not—why is that? [The Conversation](#), December 8, 2025.
- ⇒ CDC advisers delay planned vote on hepatitis B vaccine for infants. [NPR](#), December 4, 2025.
- ⇒ AI scribes may not save a lot of time on clinical notes, but they make clinicians happy. [STAT News](#), December 3, 2025.
- ⇒ Doctors have a front-row seat to the caregiver crisis. [MedPage Today](#), December 2, 2025.
- ⇒ They need a ventilator to stay alive. Getting one can be a nightmare. [KFF Health News](#), December 2, 2025.
- ⇒ FDA offers staff 'agentic AI' to support premarket reviews, administrative tasks. [STAT News](#), December 1, 2025.
- ⇒ My patient was making a fatal decision. What could I do? [The New York Times](#), November 30, 2025.
- ⇒ Not serious enough to turn on the siren, toddler's 39-mile ambulance ride still cost over \$9,000. [Headline Health](#), November 28, 2025.



BIOETHICS OPPORTUNITIES

ONGOING

- ⇒ American Journal of Bioethics: [YouTube channel](#) containing previous webinars
- ⇒ Children's Mercy Kansas City: [Pediatric Ethics Podcast series](#)
- ⇒ Consortium on Law and Values in Health, Environment & the Life Sciences: [Events](#)
- ⇒ The Hastings Center: [Webinars](#) and [Events](#)
- ⇒ [Health Ethics](#) podcast with host Bryan Pilkington, PhD (Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine): Find on Google Podcasts, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Audible.
- ⇒ The MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics: [YouTube channel](#) containing previous lectures
- ⇒ Michigan State University Center for Bioethics and Social Justice: [Recorded Webinars](#)
- ⇒ Office for Human Research Protections [Luminaries Lecture Series](#)
- ⇒ University of Minnesota Center for Bioethics: [Events](#)

BIOETHICS SERVICES AT THE UIHC

ETHICS CONSULT SERVICE

This service is a clinical resource for UI Health Care personnel who would like help addressing an ethical question or problem related to a patient's care. Consults can be ordered through EPIC or by paging the ethics consultant on call. For more information, [click here](#).



CLINICAL RESEARCH ETHICS SERVICE

We provide free consultation on ethical issues related to research design, tissue banking, genetic research results, informed consent, and working with vulnerable patient populations. In particular, we assist clinical investigators in identifying and addressing the ethical challenges that frequently arise when designing or conducting research with human subjects. These include ethical challenges in sampling design; randomized and placebo-controlled studies; participant recruitment and informed consent; return of individual-level research results; community engagement processes; and more. For more information, [click here](#).