

# BIOETHICS & HUMANITIES NEWSLETTER



## 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](#)

## Inside this issue:

**REGISTER NOW!** 2

**Ethics in Healthcare, May 29, 2026**

**Humanities Corner:** Poem and reflection by Elena Volfson, M4 student 3

**Bioethics in the Literature** 4-5

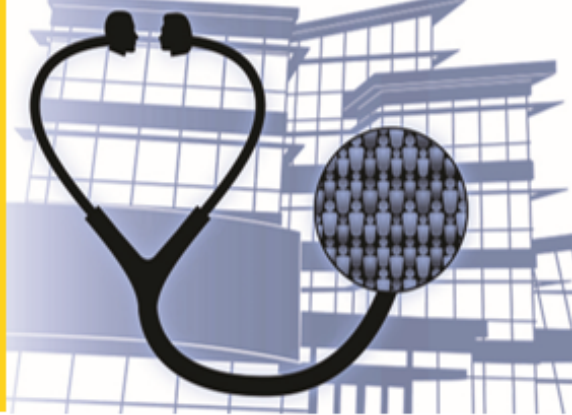
**Bioethics in the News** 6

**Bioethics Opportunities** 7

**Bioethics Services at the UIHC** 7

# 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*

Micah Prochaska, MD, MSc, SFHM



## 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 **Elena Volfson, a fourth year medical student**. Her creative work is a poem 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.

*A truth delayed can twist like thread,  
Each silent hour a heavier dread.  
The mind fills gaps the heart can't bear,  
With fears that grow from empty air.  
Speak with care and do not stall  
Compassion's voice could bridge it all.  
For honesty, when gently shown,  
Will heal far more than what's unknown.*

I believe that there is an ethical responsibility for physicians to provide patients with as much detail on their diagnosis as possible/as is known. Withholding a diagnosis leads to a lot of anxiety and confusion for patients. While I can understand waiting short term to gather all information, it should not be withheld longer than necessary.

# BIOETHICS IN THE LITERATURE

- ⇒ Alizadeh M, Bahrami S, Saeedi Z, Khaninezhad L. Outcomes of team based learning in teaching medical ethics: A systematic review. [BMC Med Ethics](#). 2025 Dec 30; 26: 184.
- ⇒ Allen JW, Levy N, Wilkinson D. Empowering patient autonomy: The role of large language models (LLMs) in scaffolding informed consent in medical practice. [Bioethics](#). 2026 Feb; 40: 183-193.
- ⇒ Brummett A. Offering "faux codes": An ethical option for the patient who can't tell their family no. [Hastings Cent Rep](#). 2025 Nov-Dec; 55: 2-6.
- ⇒ Clinton AE. Defining death anew: Reexamining the twentieth-century brain death debates and the Uniform Determination of Death Act. [Hastings Cent Rep](#). 2025 Nov-Dec; 55: 29-37.
- ⇒ Courtwright A. Justifying organ allocation out of sequence. [Am J Bioeth](#). 2026 Jan; 26: 60-70.
- ⇒ Elwyn G, Leavitt HB, Vesling M, Jacobs CR, Lund L. 'A return on investment'. How shared decision-making benefits doctors: A key informant interview study. [BMJ Open](#). 2025 Dec 24; 15: e107732.
- ⇒ Francis UM, Whitney HM, Shakhsheer BA. Artificial intelligence scribes: Enhancing workflow efficiency at what expense? [Ann Intern Med](#). 2026 Jan 27. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Gil Hayes L. Hospice communication and MAID in Washington state: A qualitative case study of transparency, ethics, and social work practice implications. [J Soc Work End Life Palliat Care](#). 2025 Dec 12: 1-24.
- ⇒ Gold CM, Sarathy L, Congdon J, Wood KE, Kendrick-Allwood S, Cummings CL, et al. Neonatal toxicology testing: Ethical considerations for pediatricians. [Hosp Pediatr](#). 2026 Jan 1; 16: e64-e73.
- ⇒ Harrington CL, Bosco CM, Wightman SC, Shakhsheer BA. The ethical problems with informed consent: How inconsistencies undermine patient autonomy. [Am J Surg](#). 2026 Jan 9; 253: 116821.
- ⇒ Hoover K, French AV, Kanner LA, Debiec K, Berger-Chen S. NASPAG clinical consensus on adolescent pregnancy testing: Balancing confidentiality, consent, and disclosure. [J Pediatr Adolesc Gynecol](#). 2025 Dec 8. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Ikoona EN. Did you eat? [JAMA](#). 2026 Jan 21. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Jackson JL, Kuriyama A, Whittle J, Davis-Maxwell A, Thompson M, Murphy MG, et al. The prevalence and characteristics of difficult patient encounters : A systematic review and meta-analysis. [Ann Intern Med](#). 2026 Jan 13. [Epub ahead of print]



# BIOETHICS IN THE LITERATURE (CONTINUED)

- ⇒ Lewis A, Quinn G, Mutcherson K. Ethical controversies in the Adriana Smith case in Georgia: Brain death/death by neurologic criteria in pregnancy. [Am J Bioeth](#). 2026 Jan; 26: 13-26.
- ⇒ Liu Y, Amin A, Frazier P. The role of demographic characteristics in us medical students' professional well-being and medical school experiences: An intersectional approach. [PLoS One](#). 2025; 20: e0338906.
- ⇒ Parsons MV, Solomon ED, Baldwin K, Mozersky J, DuBois JM. Mandating evidence-based informed consent practices: A critical engagement with IRB leader focus group findings. [Ethics Hum Res](#). 2026 Jan-Feb; 48: 12-27.
- ⇒ Pope TM. Brain death: Five mandates to continue technologic support after death. [Am J Bioeth](#). 2026 Jan; 26: 41-43.
- ⇒ Saleem S. Argument for consensual paternalism in shared decision-making: Rediscovering autonomy in Western bioethics. [Bioethics](#). 2026 Jan; 40: 21-26.
- ⇒ Stead W. Against medical advice. [JAMA](#). 2026 Jan 15. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Tarzian A. Autonomy, truth-telling, and beneficence: A Jehovah's Witness case of conditional refusal of blood products. [Am J Bioeth](#). 2026 Jan; 26: 127-128.
- ⇒ Udawatta M, Mateen FJ. Applying an ethical lens to the treatment of people with multiple sclerosis. [Ann Clin Transl Neurol](#). 2025 Dec 31. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Williams AM, Trahanas J, Bommareddi S, McGann KC, Ahmad A, Lima B, et al. Donation after circulatory death heart transplant without preimplant reanimation using rapid ultraoxygenated recovery. [JAMA](#). 2026 Jan 26. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Yarahmadi S, Cheraghian T, Jafarifar S. Legal and ethical conflicts in hospital settings: Thematic synthesis of qualitative studies focused on nursing practice. [BMC Med Ethics](#). 2025 Dec 30; 26: 186.
- ⇒ Young MJ, Koch C. Consciousness and controlled donation after circulatory determination of death. [JAMA](#). 2026 Jan 26. [Epub ahead of print]

*“Growing recognition of covert consciousness raises a disquieting possibility: that individuals deemed critically ill and unconscious retain residual awareness during WLST and peri-organ donation procedures.”*

(Young and Koch)

# BIOETHICS IN THE NEWS

- ⇒ Sidelining Black women in clinical trials is not just a moral failure. It's bad science. [STAT News](#), January 27, 2026.
- ⇒ Shared decision-making on vaccines is not the enemy. [STAT News](#), January 26, 2026.
- ⇒ Increased scrutiny leads to an improved organ transplant system. [The New York Times](#), January 23, 2026.
- ⇒ When two years of academic work vanished with a single click. [Nature](#), January 22, 2026.
- ⇒ A vaccine trial is called 'unethical' and a 'unique' opportunity. Is it on or off? [NPR](#), January 22, 2026.
- ⇒ "Dr. Google" had its issues. Can ChatGPT Health do better? [MIT Technology Review](#), January 22, 2026.
- ⇒ Is 'shared decision-making being hijacked by U.S. health officials to sow doubt about vaccines? [STAT News](#), January 20, 2026.
- ⇒ Medicaid has a new way to pay for costly sickle cell treatment: Only if it works. [NPR](#), January 20, 2026.
- ⇒ Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream...about health care. [NPR](#), January 18, 2026.
- ⇒ Reports of 'AI psychosis' are emerging—here's what a psychiatric clinician has to say. [The Conversation](#), January 15, 2026.
- ⇒ Elderly men sentenced to life in prison reflect on the reality of 'hope' and growing old behind bars. [The Conversation](#), January 14, 2026.
- ⇒ China's 'Dr. Frankenstein' thinks time is on his side. [The New York Times](#), January 13, 2026.
- ⇒ The divide between pro- and anti-vaccine states is widening. [STAT News](#), January 12, 2026.
- ⇒ New York's aid-in-dying law is missing something: The doctors who can make it work. [STAT News](#), January 9, 2026.
- ⇒ Brain organoids are helping researchers, but their use also creates unease. [NPR](#), January 2, 2026.



# 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](#).