

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](#)

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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 **Madison Wahlen, a MD/PhD student**. Her creative work is a 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.

I chose to crochet this little teddy bear after reflecting on a patient encounter that I had during my sub-internship as it relates to humanism. While working on the internal medicine service, I took care of a patient who had a very prolonged hospitalization with numerous complications. When they were medically ready for discharge, we encountered significant barriers which further prolonged their hospital stay. During this time, the patient understandably became increasingly frustrated and saddened as all they wanted was to go home and heal. While I spent multiple days at their bedside listening and validating their experience and feelings, I felt helpless in my ability to truly comfort them during this difficult time. However, one morning, I decided to focus less on how I could care for them as a hospitalized patient, and more on how I could uplift them as a person.

One morning during pre-rounds, I asked my patient about their interests – did they like reading? Puzzles? Card games? I found out that they are a crafter –they love to sew. While I am not a sewist myself, I do love to craft, and I asked if they liked to crochet or knit, as I have numerous extra hooks and yarn at home that I wanted to bring to them if it was something they had interest in. To my joy, they love to crochet! I planned to bring them some supplies the next day to help them pass the time and start working on healing their mind as well as their body as they awaited insurance approval. Fortunately, they were approved that very afternoon and were able to discharge. Although I couldn't share any physical crafting items with my patient prior to discharge, I was able to really connect with them as a person, rather than as a patient. We discovered a shared joy for crochet and had a lovely discussion about following patterns and trying to design our own just by looking at a sweater. This was a moment where I realized my strengths as a physician will not only come from my knowledge, but from my ability to connect with my patients as human beings and appreciate every aspect of who they are, rather than just their medical problems.

This teddy bear represents that experience. It represents how we can connect and comfort our patients, attending not only to their physical needs, but also to their mental and emotional needs.

BIOETHICS IN THE LITERATURE

- ⇒ Barbash IJ. Building empathy. [JAMA](#). 2026 Feb 5. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Bellini C. Conscience, ethics, law and AI in high-stakes neonatal transport decisions. [Acta Paediatr](#). 2026 Jan 30. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Bilinski A. Why it is unethical not to conduct randomized trials in pregnancy. [JAMA](#). 2026 Feb 9. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Buclin CP, Burgisser N, Berner A, Juillerat A, Blanc C, Coen M, et al. Enhancing patient-dedicated time in clinical encounters: A systematic review and meta-analysis of intervention strategies. [J Gen Intern Med](#). 2026 Jan; 41: 197-205.

“Included interventions were mostly bundles that aimed at increasing the quality—rather than the quantity per se—of patient-dedicated time in clinical encounters.”

(Buclin et al.)

- ⇒ Davies E. Polarisation in medicine: How can we better engage with people who disagree with us? [BMJ](#). 2025 Nov 25; 391: r2342.

“To meaningfully engage with the people we may disagree with, we must start by listening. We must attempt to drop our defensive barriers and culture of dogmatism and instead seek to approach these conversations with curiosity and humility.”

(Davies)

- ⇒ Eijkholt M. Patient participation in clinical ethics interventions: A requirement of procedural and epistemic justice. [Bioethics](#). 2026 Feb; 40: 159-167.
- ⇒ Flanagan A, Kendall-Taylor J, Bibbins-Domingo K. Guidance for authors, peer reviewers, and editors on use of AI, language models, and chatbots. [JAMA](#). 2023 Aug 22; 330: 702-703.
- ⇒ Frush BW, Curlin FA. "Who am I to say?" Why clinical ethics consultants should be trained to give directive counsel. [HEC Forum](#). 2026 Feb 1. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Heer-Stavert S. What does a doctor look like? Asking AI. [BMJ](#). 2025 Dec 17; 391: e088968.
- ⇒ Jividen RA, Ford PJ, Sankary L, Morley G. Ethical analysis of extracorporeal membrane oxygenation using the values balancing framework: A case study. [Crit Care Nurse](#). 2026 Feb 1; 46: 50-58.
- ⇒ Kious BM, Levitt S, van Veen S, Buchman D, Costa L, Froelich K, et al. Addressing 'futility' in psychiatry: A consensus statement. [Psychol Med](#). 2026 Jan 14; 56: e16.

BIOETHICS IN THE LITERATURE (CONTINUED)

- ⇒ Kleinman RA, Torous J, Danilewitz M. Use of large-language models for therapy: Promise and perils. [Ann Intern Med](#). 2026 Feb 17. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Koh HK, Frederick DE, Balboni TA, O'Reilly SM, Kelly JF, Humphreys K, et al. Spirituality and harmful or hazardous alcohol and other drug use: A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. [JAMA Psychiatry](#). 2026 Feb 18. [Epub ahead of print]
- ⇒ Lyerly AD, Muthakana R, Webster A, Lee J, Moss S, Fairey M, et al. Policies for the inclusion of pregnant women in research: Results from an international and a us study. [Ethics Hum Res](#). 2026 Jan-Feb; 48: 2-11.
- ⇒ Ménard A, Singh Y, Yin C, Ruller S, Konikoff L, Kierulf J, et al. Empowering older patients in advance care planning: Evaluating MyCare™ as a decision support tool. [Health Expect](#). 2026 Feb; 29: e70545.
- ⇒ Moale AC, Razskazovskiy V, Rak KJ, Richardson A, Dhole N, Butler RA, et al. Clinicians' perspectives on strengthening interprofessional teamwork to support surrogate decision-makers of critically ill patients in ICUs. [Crit Care Explor](#). 2026 Jan 1; 8: e1365.
- ⇒ Preti BTB, Shih B, Merrick M, Sanatani MS, Moniz T. Behind the screen: Exploring trainee experiences with consultant-involved conflicts through Reddit narratives. [Clin Teach](#). 2026 Apr; 23: e70349.
- ⇒ Rudra P, Balke WT, Kacprowski T, Ursin F, Salloch S. Large language models for surgical informed consent: An ethical perspective on simulated empathy. [J Med Ethics](#). 2026 Jan 22; 52: 85-90.
- ⇒ Shelmerdine SC, Nour MM. AI chatbots and the loneliness crisis. [BMJ](#). 2025 Dec 11; 391: r2509.
- ⇒ Snyder Sulmasy L, Carney JK. Physicians are not providers: The ethical significance of names in health care: A policy paper from the American College of Physicians. [Ann Intern Med](#). 2026 Feb 10. [Epub ahead of print]

“The words physician and provider are not interchangeable. Provider undermines the physician’s ethical obligations, clinical integrity, and accountability, as well as trust in the patient–physician relationship. The term should not be used to describe physicians, nor should physicians use it to describe themselves, their team members, or their trainees.”

(Snyder Sulmasy and Carney)

- ⇒ Tummala M, McNicoll L. Using life stories to support patient-centered care: A narrative review of implementation and impact. [J Gen Intern Med](#). 2026 Jan; 41: 187-196.
- ⇒ Tung MG, Palamara K, Ripp JA, Saddawi-Konefka D. Meaning and comfort in physician well-being: An integrated framework. [JAMA](#). 2026 Feb 16. [Epub ahead of print]

BIOETHICS IN THE NEWS

- ⇒ Sometimes, it would be unethical not to use AI in medicine. [STAT News](#), February 20, 2026.
- ⇒ When IV opioids are in short supply at the hospital, who gets pain relief? [STAT News](#), February 17, 2026.
- ⇒ Medical education must go beyond individual pathology. [MedPage Today](#), February 14, 2026.
- ⇒ A Greek myth explains the biggest challenge facing oncologists like me. [STAT News](#), February 12, 2026.
- ⇒ NIH redefines 'clinical trials,' dividing researchers. [STAT News](#), February 12, 2026.
- ⇒ Doctors are quietly using AI. Bans won't fix that. [MedPage Today](#), February 11, 2026.
- ⇒ WHO director-general calls plans for U.S.-funded vaccine trial 'unethical.' [STAT News](#), February 11, 2026.
- ⇒ Don't call physicians 'providers,' medical group says. [MedPage Today](#), February 10, 2026.
- ⇒ University of Minnesota med school changes class after accusations of UnitedHealth 'propaganda.' [The Minnesota Star Tribune](#), February 10, 2026.
- ⇒ If you have Alzheimer's disease, who will take part in your care? [STAT News](#), February 9, 2026.
- ⇒ Science communication should be a core competency in medical training. [MedPage Today](#), February 9, 2026.
- ⇒ A.I. is making doctors answer a question: What are they really good for? [The New York Times](#), February 9, 2026.
- ⇒ Houston doctor indicted on charges he falsified records to block patients' liver transplants. [Associated Press](#), February 5, 2026.
- ⇒ Digital ghosts: Are AI replicas of the dead an innovative medical tool or an ethical nightmare? [The Conversation](#), February 4, 2026.
- ⇒ Doctors' group endorses restrictions on gender-related surgery for minors. [The New York Times](#), February 4, 2026.
- ⇒ My patient was dying. His wife refused to accept it. [The New York Times](#), February 1, 2026.



BIOETHICS OPPORTUNITIES

UPCOMING

- ⇒ Alan Ross Hawley Distinguished Visitorship and Lecture Series: "[AI in Medicine: Legal and Ethical Issues](#)," Monday, March 2nd, 12:45pm-1:45pm, 235 Boyd Law Building

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](#).