

The Role of Clinical Ethics in Broadening Advance Care Planning for the LGBTQ+ Community

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Background

With a generous contribution from Case Western Reserve University's Inamori International Center for Ethics and Excellence, I was named the 2023 Third Federal Summer Ethics Fellow. I pursued my practicum and fellowship at MetroHealth's Center for Biomedical Ethics (2500 MetroHealth Drive, Cleveland, Ohio 44109). One of my major projects focused on broadening Advance Care Planning (ACP) accessibility and use for the LGBTQ+ community.

Population

The population I aimed to serve through this project was the LGBTQ+ community of Northeast Ohio, by hosting events, conducting a literature review on the status of clinical ethics-driven ACP nationally. This literature review led to a forthcoming publication which will be included in the Bioethics Network of Ohio's BIO Quarterly in the coming months.

Learning Objectives

1. Recognize through researching current literature the disproportionately low rates of ACP in the LGBTQ+ population.
2. Describe the ways in which advance care planning in marginalized communities can help reduce health inequities.
3. Justify broadening the role of the clinical ethicist as a community health advocate, supplemented by time volunteering at MetroHealth shadowing clinical ethicists.



Figure 1—Logos: Logos of collaborating organizations.

Activities

- Independent research project on ACP for the LGBTQ+ community of Northeast Ohio.
- Literature review on ACP status of LGBTQ+ individuals nationwide.
- Planning and facilitation of community-focused events held by MetroHealth and CWRU's Inamori Center to combat disparities in ACP status for LGBTQ+ individuals.
- Events included presentations on the specifics of ACP; ACP documents were available for attendees to complete with an onsite notary public.
- Forthcoming publication on the role of clinical ethicists as community advocates for LGBTQ+ patients and others who have been historically disadvantaged by the healthcare system.
- Volunteer hours spent observing MetroHealth's 24-hour clinical ethics consultation service, rounds in ICU units, and assisting with educational talks.



Figure 2—Flier: Promotional flier for one of the events I helped coordinate and facilitate, held on June 25, 2023 at Studio West 117 by MetroHealth and Case Western Reserve University's Inamori International Center for Ethics and Excellence.



Figure 3—QR code: Scannable QR code available to at events for attendees to access more information and fillable ACP documents.

Deliverables

1. Article written (forthcoming publication in the BioEthics Network of Ohio's *BIO Quarterly*) on ACP in the LGBTQ+ community and the role of clinical ethics in improving this.
2. Literature review conducted on the state of ACP for the LGBTQ+ community nationally, as well as current advocacy efforts by clinical ethicists.
3. Facilitation, planning, organization, and execution of a community-centered event on June 25, 2023, at Studio West 117th, targeted toward the LGBTQ+ community of northeastern Ohio.
4. Literature review conducted on Crisis Standards of Care (CSC) plans nationwide and the inclusion/exclusion criteria for burn patients. Findings were used to assist MetroHealth's CBME as they prepare to present an expanded poster on the topic at the upcoming American Burn Association (ABA) meeting.
5. Summary of methodology for the literature review on CSC plans nationwide. (Originally shared with the CBME team to describe the details of my process and the relevant updated results.)

Lessons Learned

- Observing rounds, I learned about the day-to-day role of clinical ethicists in a hospital system like MetroHealth and how crucial clinical ethics can be to patient care.
- Community-centered events provided me the opportunity to speak with fellow LGBTQ+ Ohioans and learn more about their experiences with healthcare.
- I saw in practice the importance of meeting community needs and prioritizing the voices of those directly impacted by public health interventions.

Public Health Implications

I have a stronger understanding of the current role of ethics in a clinical setting, as well as opportunity for clinical ethicists to take on a broader role in patient advocacy, specifically related to ACP for LGBTQ+ patients and others who frequently face discrimination at the hands of the healthcare system.

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