

# Fact Sheet for Clinicians

## Patient Care Ethics Committee

### Patient Care Ethics Committee (PCEC)

The Patient Care Ethics Committee (PCEC) is a Women's and Children's Health Network (WCHN) Committee that provides staff and clinical teams with independent advice about ethical issues pertaining to individual patient care or general matters of ethical concern.

The PCEC provides a supportive environment within the institution that facilitates and encourages a structured discussion of ethical issues related to patient care and institutional policy affecting patient care.

Clinicians can refer any ethical issue to the Committee that directly or indirectly relates to patient care/treatment that they are concerned about or would like an independent perspective on.

### Committee's Key Responsibilities

- Provides independent ethics advice on clinical cases and issues.
- Provides a forum to assist staff and patients confronting difficult ethical issues pertaining to patient care.
- Works with the Patient Ethicist to develop a process that assists clinical staff to recognise, explore, and seek to resolve ethical and professional issues within the WCHN.
- Works with the Patient Ethicist to provide a structured analysis of those institutional policies that are characterised by significant ethical content.
- Supports the Patient Ethicist in fostering educational initiatives in ethics.

### Scheduling of Meetings

Whilst the committee will make every attempt to accommodate urgent cases, meetings will be dependent on the availability of PCEC members, members of the treating team and the patient/family.

In the event that an urgent committee meeting cannot be convened, the referring clinician can request that the Patient Ethicist, or if not available, a member of the PCEC attend a case conference to contribute to the discussion. However, PCEC review can only occur if the quorum requirements are met, hence, staff should refer case to the committee as early as possible.



### More information can be found at

[http://www.wch.sa.gov.au/services/professionals/ethics\\_support/index.html](http://www.wch.sa.gov.au/services/professionals/ethics_support/index.html)

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## PCEC Process

- ❖ Staff are encouraged to discuss with the Patient Ethicist the ethical issue/s they are concerned about as soon as possible prior to a case or issue being referred to the PCEC.
- ❖ Once it is decided to make a referral to the PCEC, a completed referral form, and any documentation, is to be submitted to the PCEC Executive Officer (EO).  

This form can be obtained from the PCEC EO or from the [Ethics Support \(Clinical\)](#) webpage under *Quick Find* on the WCHN Intranet.
- ❖ The PCEC Chair will review the referral and the PCEC EO will arrange a meeting with the clinicians involved in the care/treatment of the patient will be arranged to discuss the ethical concern/s. Please note, clinicians involved are only asked to attend the first part of the meeting (normally the first 30-60 minutes).
- ❖ If appropriate, concurrent with the scheduling of a PCEC meeting, the patient and/or family will be invited to meet with two members of the committee. If the patient and/or family choose to meet with members of the PCEC, the EO to the PCEC will arrange the meeting.
- ❖ The purpose of meeting with the patient and/or family is to obtain an understanding of their views, which are then conveyed to the full Committee.
- ❖ After consideration of all relevant information/reports, PCEC members will formulate a set of recommendations. Following noting by the hospital Executive and relevant Medical Divisional Director/s, the recommendations will be provided to the clinicians involved in the patient's care/treatment.
- ❖ Where appropriate, the PCEC's view is then conveyed to the family by the primary treating medical clinician.

Please note, the PCEC is an advisory Committee only and does not have executive powers.

## Contact Details

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