

This document is a summary of the

Ethical and Religious Directives

for Catholic Healthcare Services
Sixth Edition (ERDs.)

This summary was provided and verified to its accuracy by The Catholic Health Association (2018) for distribution by St. Joseph's Health.

This summary was not prepared by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and does not substitute for the actual reading of the document. An official copy of the ERDs can be found on Public Folders under the heading of ETHICS.



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Ethical and Religious Directives

for Catholic Healthcare Services



St. Joseph's Health

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There are two aims of the
**Ethical and Religious Directives for
Catholic Health Care Services:**

1. Reaffirm the ethical standards that flow from the Church's teaching about human dignity.
2. Provide authoritative guidance on some of the specific moral issues facing Catholic health care.



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PART ONE:

The social responsibility of Catholic health care services

- Catholic health care is a continuation of the healing ministry of Christ. It is guided by four principles:
 1. Promote and defend human dignity
 2. Care for the poor
 3. Promote the common good
 4. Steward resources responsibly

Sample Directives

- Catholic health ministry is a social good and a community service
- It should be marked by a spirit of mutual respect among caregivers & an exemplification of the compassion of Christ toward those it serve
- It should treat employees respectfully fostering a meaningful & humanizing work environment
- It should distinguish itself by its service to & advocacy for the poor & marginalized
- It should be a responsible steward of the health care resources available to it

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PART TWO:

The pastoral & spiritual responsibility of Catholic health care

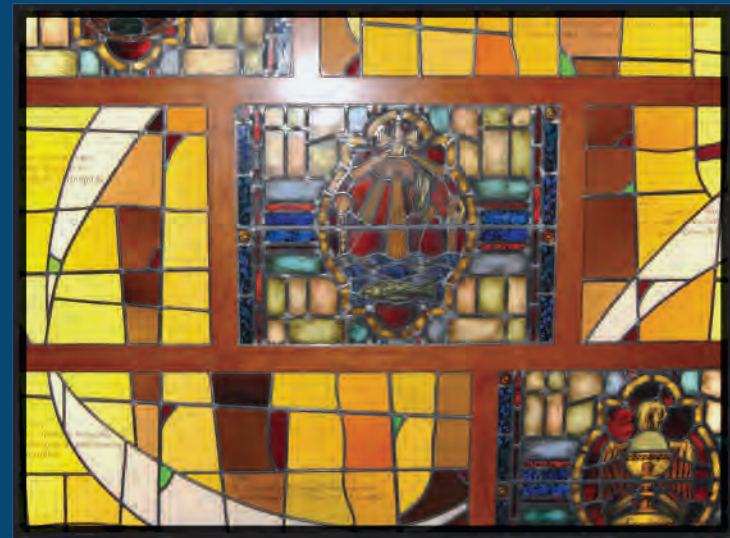
- Catholic health care has the responsibility to treat those in need in a way that respects the human dignity & eternal destiny of all
- Since a Catholic health care institution is a community of healing and compassion, care is not limited to the physical; it also embraces the psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of the person hence, pastoral care is an integral part of Catholic health care

Sample Directives

- A Catholic health care organization should provide pastoral care to minister to the religious & spiritual needs of those it serves
- Pastoral care personnel should work in close collaboration with local parishes & community clergy
- Pastoral services should be available to all in keeping with their religious beliefs or affiliation

Respect Trust Honesty

RESPECT FOR PRIVACY Confidentiality



4 PART FOUR:

Issues in care for the beginning of life

- The Church's commitment to human dignity inspires an abiding concern for the sanctity of human life from its very beginning, and to the dignity of marriage and of the marriage act by which human life is transmitted
- The Church's defense of life encompasses the unborn and the care of women & their children during and after pregnancy
- The unitive and procreative meanings of sexual intercourse must not be separated.
- Procreation is joined naturally to the marriage act

Sample Directives

- Procedures that do not separate the unitive and procreative dimensions of the marriage act may be employed to help couples conceive
- Contraception, direct sterilization, artificial insemination, IVF, and surrogate motherhood are not permitted
- Abortion is never permitted; but Catholic health care providers should provide compassionate care to those who have had an abortion
- Prenatal diagnosis & genetic counseling may be permitted in order to promote preventive care & responsible parenthood

3 PART THREE:

The professional-patient relationship

- This relationship requires, among other things, mutual respect, trust, honesty, respect for privacy and appropriate confidentiality
- This should be a collaborative relationship, both participating in the healing process and neither acting independently
- The professional-patient relationship can never be separated from the Catholic identity of the health care institution; the faith that inspires Catholic health care guides medical decisions in ways that respect human dignity and the professional-patient relationship

Sample Directives

- The inherent dignity of the human person must be respected and protected regardless of the person's health problem or social status
- Patients have the right to make medical treatment decisions including access to medical and other information regarding their care; free and informed consent; the right to make an advance directive & name a surrogate
- Each person's privacy & confidentiality must be respected
- The well-being of the whole person must always be taken into account



Faith Love Support DUTY Respect

5 PART FIVE:

Issues in the care for the dying

- Catholic health care ministry faces death with the confidence of faith; it witnesses to the belief that God has created each person for eternal life
- A Catholic health care institution will be a community of respect, love, and support to patients & their families as they face death
- Effective pain management is critical in the appropriate care of the dying
- We have a duty to preserve our lives, but that duty is not absolute
- The use of medical technologies is judged in light of the Christian meaning of life, suffering, and death

Sample Directives

- Help patient prepare for death: provide necessary information for decision-making; respect the free and informed judgment of a competent patient to accept or refuse life-sustaining treatment
- A person may forgo extraordinary or disproportionate means of preserving life
- There should be a presumption in favor of providing nutrition & hydration, including medically assisted, as long as the benefits it provides outweigh the burdens
- Assisted suicide and euthanasia cannot be condoned
- Patients should be kept as free of pain as possible; without a compelling reason, the patient should not be deprived of consciousness

6 PART SIX:

Forming new partnerships with health care organizations & providers

- New partnerships can be viewed as opportunities for Catholic health care institutions & services to further the Catholic mission and serve the common good
- New partnerships can pose serious challenges to the identity of Catholic health care institutions & services. Catholic moral tradition provides principles for assessing the level of cooperation with other healthcare organizations
- Scandal can result when partnerships are not built on common values & moral principles
- Highlights the importance of working with the Bishops on ensuring the Catholic Identity in Catholic healthcare organizations

Sample Directives

- Approval by the Bishop(s) is needed for any partnerships that could adversely affect the identity of a Catholic healthcare organization or if there is a risk of scandal
- It is the responsibility of the Catholic entity to assure that activities judged to be morally wrong are avoided at all levels of the organization
- Whatever comes under the control of the Catholic institution must be operated in full accord with the moral teachings of the Catholic Church and these directives