What is the role of the Clinical Ethics Committee?

The Clinical Ethics Committee is there to serve health care professionals, users and their families as well as to help the CSSS-IUGS execute its administrative duties.

Training

Training begins by covering an ethical problem submitted by groups working at the CSSS-IUGS. The goal is to generate and encourage a reflection on ethical attitudes and behaviours. Case managers, nurses and volunteers have benefited from this type of training.

Assistance and ethical opinions for clinical decision-making

- On request or at the initiative of the committee, opinions on subjects which concern the members of the institution from an ethical perspective may be issued.

For example: ethical reflections or guidelines which can facilitate daily decision-making in difficult situations such as cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, pain relief, care consent, the reduction of misdemeanours in a context of homelessness and addictions.

Assistance to identify ethical points of reference for institutional regulations and policies

- On request or at the initiative of the committee, an ethical reflection or opinions on rules, regulations or institutional policies which have an ethical dimension may be carried out.

The preparation of documents such as the Code of Ethics of the CSSS-IUGS stands as an example.

Who can call upon the committee?

The Clinical Ethics Committee is there to answer requests related to the activities of the CSSS-IUGS. Users, their representatives and their relatives who have an interest in them may also call upon the services of the committee.

How to call upon the committee?

A request for an opinion on a specific case must contain:

- a description of the situation;
- the issues or ethical questions at hand;
- a summary of the steps taken to date to solve the problem;
- the coordinates of the applicant.

A written request for an opinion must be addressed to the chairman of the Clinical Ethics Committee through Executive Management.

If a request for an opinion is conducted on behalf of a user, the latter (or his representative) must have given his prior consent.

During an emergency or to speak directly to a committee member, it is possible to reach the chairman of the Clinical Ethics Committee or one of its members by dialing 819 780-2222.

The list of Clinical Ethics Committee members is available at: www.csss-iugs.ca.

How does the committee formulate an opinion?

The identity of any person involved in the case being addressed by the Clinical Ethics Committee is not revealed to its members. Only the committee representative who has gathered the information will be in possession of it and will maintain its confidentiality.

Any information brought to the attention of the committee is confidential.

Following a rigorous ethical deliberation process, the committee will provide a written opinion which it will send to and review with the applicant. If the user has given consent to the consultation, the opinion is sent to him and is filed in his record.

The opinions of the ethics committee are advisory and non-binding. They are intended to raise discussion and to improve the understanding and clinical reflection of complex situations so that users and practitioners can find a reasonable solution to an ethical dilemma.

In no event shall they substitute the decision-making responsibility of the teams.
Why does the CSSS-IUGS have a Clinical Ethics Committee?

The CSSS-IUGS offers a wide array of quality health care and social services at every stage of life. Professionals, staff and users are confronted with ethical issues or dilemmas on a daily basis. Each person involved in the decision process must understand the underlying complexity of the problem, the standards involved and the moral values being promoted.

The Clinical Ethics Committee of the CSSS-IUGS offers a place for dialogue, reflection and deliberation on ethical issues raised when care, treatment or services are being delivered to individuals.¹

What are ethics?

Ethics is a rigorous reflection on conduct and moral values which justifies the best decisions for those concerned by a situation and which motivates action. Ethical reflection is always made in a perspective of self-realization as both an individual and a community member. Clinical ethics is specifically concerned with decisions to be taken in the fields of health care and social services.

Who sits on the committee?

The Clinical Ethics Committee is composed of at least eight members who are representative of the various departments of the CSSS-IUGS, and who have either an expertise or an interest in ethics. Whenever necessary, the committee may call upon any person it deems useful to fulfill its duties. The committee is composed of physicians, nurses, psycho-social counsellors and at least one spiritual care counsellor or theologian. An external member also sits on the committee.

The list of Clinical Ethics Committee members is available at: www.csss-iugs.ca.


Clinical Ethics Committee folders

Available at www.csss-iugs.ca/
The CSSS-IUGS/Committees and Councils

To reach the committee

Telephone: Executive Management 819 780-2220, voicemail 80144

Role Services
Benefiting from Its Services

Clinical Ethics Committee
819 780-2220, voicemail 80144

www.csss-iugs.ca