

**Book:** *Ethics in Health Administration: A Practical Approach for Decision Makers*

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*Ethics in Health Administration: A Practical Approach for Decision Makers* is a text for anyone interested in applying ethical principles to issues encountered in health care administration. It illustrates many of the ethical issues that health care managers investigate on a daily basis. The text is divided into four sections. A model with four concentric circles is used to depict the influences that impact ethical decision making. The model moves from the outermost circle that represents the level of theory, through external forces to the innermost circle that represents personal influences.

*Section one, the outermost circle, focuses on the influence of theory and foundational issues that are the core of ethical decision making.*

Chapter one "Practical Theory" is an introductory chapter that introduces many of the theories that challenge healthcare administrators. Many of the early philosophical principles are presented in this section.

Chapter two "Autonomy" helps the reader understand the principle of autonomy as it applies to health care ethics. Informed consent is presented as the underlying consideration for deciding patient choices.

Chapter three "Nonmaleficence and Beneficence" discusses these two parallel principles of ethics with nonmaleficence requiring that individuals not be harmed and beneficence working to respect individuality.

Chapter four "Justice" stresses the need to do what is fair in health care settings. This involves treating patients in a consistent manner, and deciding who in society will actually receive the benefits of health care.

*Section two, the next circle, spotlights market forces and the social responsibility of ethical decision making.*

Chapter five "Who Will Guard the Guardians?" is the first chapter of a new section and focuses on the influence of external controls and how they affect ethical practices. Specific issues include: advocacy, control, accountability, compliance, and competency.

Chapter six "Market Forces and Ethics" takes a realistic look at the relationship between market forces and ethics. Separate sections on managed care and integrated medicine are also discussed.

Chapter seven "Social Responsibility and Ethics" poses the question of whether or not health care can be socially responsible and still meet its business goals. Quality assurance, patient safety, value, and public health are all discussed.

Chapter eight "Technology and Ethics" looks at the relationship between ethical issues of balancing lucrative revenues against the ethical practices of one's organization.

*Section three integrates chapters on organizational mission, fiscal responsibility, corporate compliance, and patient issues that affect ethical decision making.*

The third section begins with chapter nine, "No Mission No Margin: Fiscal Responsibility", and explores the complexity of health care financing and how it affects ethical issues. How does a health care organization maintain a bottom line and keep its doors open?

“Organizational Culture and Ethics”, chapter ten studies culture from both a macro and micro view – looking at the organization’s cultural makeup and examining the many subcultures that exist and how they all relate.

Chapter eleven “Corporate Compliance: The Letter or the Spirit of the Law” starts with a historical view of how health care has evolved into a sophisticated system that is market based and the need to push health care organizations to new levels of quality.

Chapter twelve, “Patient Issues and Ethics” describes how patients are viewed by the health care facility. The patient care experience is the centerpiece of the chapter.

*The final section, and innermost circle, presents the essential aspects of personal and professional ethics. Discussion centers on the professional dimension of ethical behavior and how administrators can maintain moral integrity.*

Chapter thirteen, “Moral Integrity” introduces the last section of the book. It presents various ideas about how one can be moral within such a challenging environment such as health care. Definitions of morality and its ethical relationship are presented.

Chapter fourteen “Codes of Ethics and Administrative Practices” familiarizes the student with rationale professional groups and associations use to create codes of ethics. Key features and limitations of codes of ethics are presented.

Chapter fifteen “Practicing as an Ethical Administrator” begins with the notion of why it is important to apply ethics on a daily basis. The author shows how some of the essential functions of any administrator (planning, organizing, directing) are coupled with ethics to enhance these functions.

The last chapter, sixteen, “Where Do We Go from Here?” provides a summary of all the subject matter encountered in the text. Future challenges, such as disaster preparedness, technology changes, economic credentialing, and changes in demographics are also discussed.