

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ebola Virus Disease and Ethics: A Mercy Approach

Mercy Corporate Ethics Committee

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The Mercy Corporate Ethics Committee has identified common scenarios and questions that may arise with regards to the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) and wishes to provide this document as guidance for leaders to help support our co-workers in responding appropriately.

It should be noted that Ebola Virus Disease in the United States is not entirely comparable to pandemic but that much of the research performed related to pandemic influenza and other disasters brings credible evidence to the manner in which EVD could be addressed from an ethics perspective.

GUIDING VALUES AND CONCEPTS

Dignity, Justice, and the Common Good

TWO PROFESSIONAL DUTIES

A Duty to Care

- **Key Ethical Guidelines:**
 - Leadership should provide appropriate training and equipment for co-workers.
 - Physicians and nurses have a professional obligation to use their skills as needed; other co-workers may be asked to volunteer and/or compensated differently based on their level of risk.
 - Appropriate medical care should be provided to potential EVD and symptomatic patients, including palliative care.
 - Respect and compassionate care must always be provided, regardless of the circumstances
 - Pastoral care may be provided in innovative ways.

A Duty to Protect Others

- **Key Ethical Guidelines:**
 - Public health protocols should be followed by all co-workers for potential and confirmed cases of EVD.
 - There is a special obligation to protect the preborn, laboring mothers, and co-workers.
 - Transparency should be balanced with patient's privacy and confidentiality.
 - EVD patients may be transferred to a State or CMS-designated facility if feasible to best protect both the EVD patients and the ability of the Mercy facility to continue to serve the local community.