

# The Fifth Annual Catholic Health Care Innovation in Ethics Forum

In September 2023, Mercy hosted the fifth annual Catholic Healthcare Innovation in Ethics Forum (CHIEF) virtually. The CHIEF planning committee—made up of ethicists from Ascension, CHRISTUS Health, CommonSpirit Health, Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System, Hospital Sisters Health System, Mercy, OSF HealthCare, and Providence — affirmed the goal of CHIEF: to create an opportunity for those in Catholic healthcare to explore, present, and discuss innovative ideas in healthcare ethics.

In previous years, CHIEF solicited talks on specific areas of interest. CHIEF 2023 welcomed all proposals topics and encouraged submissions in:

- Self-Compassion for the Ethicist
- High Reliability in Clinical Ethics
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Most of the conference presentations were “lightning talks,” which consist of presentations completed in seven minutes with three slides. Presenters were grouped by subject area, and each group was followed by a 45-minute panel discussion with the presenters. CHIEF 2023 had a special 75-minute presentation dedicated to the ethical issues surrounding Thoracoabdominal Normothermic Regional Perfusion (TA-NRP) for organ donation after circulatory

death. Over the two and a half days, there were seventeen presentations from fourteen ethicists on topics ranging from “Normothermic Regional Perfusion for Organ Donation after Circulatory Death” to “Clinical Ethics as a Liturgical Approach.”

CHIEF 2023 conducted two workshop sessions. One workshop, “Healthcare Ethics Consultation Training - Legislative and Regulatory Advocacy” was led by Dr. Michael Redinger – Associate Professor at Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine. The other workshop session was led by Dr. Becket Gremmels - System Vice President, Theology and Ethics of CommonSpirit Health – on “Developing a Template Curriculum for Clinical Ethics Fellowship.” The interest in this workshop has led to efforts outside of CHIEF to help Catholic health systems create working templates for future clinical ethics fellowships!

One of the highlights of every CHIEF is the keynote address. In the past, CHIEF participants have benefitted from the wisdom of Dr. Ron Hamel, Dr. Carol Taylor, and other leaders with significant careers contributing to the field of Catholic healthcare ethics. This year, Fr. Thomas Kopfensteiner joined CHIEF to share his reflections and experiences as a substantial contributor to the development of the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services. In his

presentation, “The Ethical and Religious Directives: History, Content, and Adequacy,” Fr. Kopfensteiner gave attendees a “behind-the-scenes” understanding of the development of the ERDs, using both humor and authentic storytelling to deepen attendees understanding of the humanness of the document.

Fr. Kopfensteiner divided his presentation into three sections, discussing the history & content, reviewing cases and key accomplishments, and reflecting on future directions. In each of the sections, he paired the sharing of history with reflection about its implications for the work today. The keynote addressed gifted participants with a deeper understanding of the developments of the ERDs and a moment for reflection on how the ERDs continue to shape and influence the work of Catholic Healthcare ethics today and into the future.

At the conclusion of every CHIEF, a survey assesses if the annual gathering has stayed true to its stated goal: to create an opportunity for those in Catholic healthcare to explore, present, and discuss innovative ideas in healthcare ethics. For 2023, CHIEF participants gave the conference an overall rating of 4.73/5 on overall quality, a score the planning committee was thrilled to see. There are two notable scores from the survey demonstrating CHIEF is achieving its stated goal:

- 72.7% are “Very Likely” or “Somewhat Likely” to make changes to the ethics services at their respective organizations.
- 81.8% believe the format of CHIEF offers more value compared to other professional events.

The continued positive results of CHIEF

provide confidence and assurance to the planning committee that CHIEF continues to deliver on the purpose and goal to create a space for those serving in Catholic healthcare ethics to share and discuss, innovate, and deepen the sense of community through this crucial and meaningful work.

We hope you enjoy this issue of HCEUSA, highlighting some of the innovative work coming out of CHIEF 2023. Keep your eyes (and email) open for information about the next CHIEF in Late Summer/Fall 2024! [✚](#)

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