

The Fourth Annual Catholic Healthcare Innovation in Ethics Forum

The fourth annual Catholic Healthcare Innovation in Ethics Forum (CHIEF) was hosted by OSF HealthCare in September 2022. Based on feedback from the previous year and ongoing concerns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CHIEF was again held completely virtually. The CHIEF planning committee — made up of ethicists from Ascension, CHRISTUS Health, CommonSpirit Health, Hospital Sisters Health System, Mercy, OSF HealthCare, and Providence Health & Services — affirmed the goals of CHIEF: to provide a venue for ethicists working in Catholic health care to present innovative ideas or projects, receive critical feedback, and contribute to evolving the way Catholic health care thinks about and implements ethics.

In years past, we solicited talks on specific focal areas. For CHIEF 2022 we welcomed all proposal topics and encouraged submission in:

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Organizational ethics
- Data ethics

As in previous years the two-day conference primarily relied on lightning talks for the presentations. Each presenter was limited

to seven minutes and three slides (plus a title slide). Presenters were grouped by subject area, and each group was followed by a 45-minute panel discussion and Q&A with the presenters from that session. Over the two days, there were 21 presentations from 17 ethicists on topics ranging from “Ethics on TV: Connecting ‘Armchair Ethics’ to the Bedside” to “Organizational Interbeing: Bioethics, Strategic Planning and Climate Change.”

Following the success of workshop sessions at CHIEF 2021, we solicited proposals for a workshop session at CHIEF 2022. We had one workshop session led by Dr. Alexandria Lescher, Manager of Clinical Ethics at Ascension Wisconsin, and Jessica Ullrich, Manager of Clinical Ethics at Ascension Oklahoma. Their workshop was titled: “Sharing the Practice: Five Reflections to Challenge Bias in Fertility Awareness Based Medicine.”

We were once again blessed this year with a keynote presentation from a leader in the field, Ron Hamel, PhD. Dr. Hamel preserved the tradition of CHIEF keynote presentations offering more of a retreat-like engagement, his being “‘What Are You Doing Here?’ Musings on a Journey.” Throughout the keynote, Dr. Hamel allowed for moments of reflection on key passages from 1 Kings 19:9-13 and we utilized break out rooms to discuss in small groups.

Evaluation data indicates that CHIEF 2022 was again a success. While CHIEF 2021 saw higher registration numbers (79), CHIEF 2022 had very similar participation across all sessions (around 50 participants) with lower total registrations (64). We received 26 survey responses after CHIEF. Over 73% of participants thought the event had a “high” or “higher quality” when compared to other professional events attended. Over 60% of survey respondents indicated that they would “likely” or “very likely” make changes to the ethics services at their respective organizations as a result of attending CHIEF. Such changes include but are not limited to increase time and space for personal reflection and silence, incorporation of person-first language in EMR documentation, increased conversation about Fertility Awareness Based Medicine, and more intentional integration of ethics into organizational workflows. Nearly 90% of survey respondents rated the format of CHIEF as “higher value” and “much higher value” compared to other professional conferences. New to CHIEF 2022 was a \$50 registration fee, which was waived for students. All survey respondents found a registration fee appropriate for CHIEF and 92% of respondents indicated that a \$50 registration fee was appropriate. Finally, it appears from the collected data that regardless of whether we proceed in-person or virtual, CHIEF will continue to be well received as over 50% of survey respondents said, “CHIEF was great no matter the format.”

We remain grateful to the Catholic Health Association for their offer to publish summaries of presentations in Health Care Ethics USA for presenters who wished to submit. We look forward to CHIEF 2023 again this fall, preserving its well-received format. ✚

ENDNOTES

1. You can find more information about CHIEF 2022 here: <https://www.missiononline.net/chief-2022-0920/>.
2. Rachelle Barina, Ph.D., SVP, Chief Mission Officer, Hospital Sisters Health System; Becket Gremmels, Ph.D., VP, Theology and Ethics, CommonSpirit Health; Russell Keithline, MBA, System Director, Mission Innovation, CommonSpirit Health; Nick Kockler, Ph.D., VP, System Ethics Services, Providence Health & Services; Christopher Ostertag, MA, Ph.D.(c), Director of Mission Services OSF HealthCare; Jenna Speckart, MA, DBE, VP, Mission and Ethics, Mercy; Steven Squires, Ph.D., VP, Ethics, CHRISTUS Health; Birgitta Sujdak Mackiewicz, MA, Ph.D., Central Region, Director of Ethics, OSF HealthCare; Jessica Ullrich, MS, DBE, Manager of Clinical Ethics, St. John Ascension