

The Second Annual Catholic Healthcare Innovation in Ethics Forum

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***Editor's Note:** We are pleased to present this special Winter 2021 edition of Health Care Ethics USA that features a series of articles presented by Catholic health ethicists at the Catholic Healthcare Innovation in Ethics Forum (CHIEF). The second annual forum was hosted by Providence Center for Health Care Ethics and CommonSpirit Health in September 2020. In light of the scope, range and depth of the articles, we are publishing the entire collection for our readers in this special edition. An overview of CHIEF is provided below. We will resume our normal publication of HCEUSA with the Spring 2021 issue.*

INTRODUCTION

The second annual Catholic Healthcare Innovation in Ethics Forum (CHIEF) was hosted by Providence Center for Health Care Ethics and CommonSpirit Health in September

2020.¹ While Providence had planned to host in person, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CHIEF was held virtually in conjunction with CommonSpirit Health. Regardless of venue, the goals of CHIEF remained the same: 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. This year we identified five focal areas for submissions:

1. Ethics Across the Continuum
2. Ethics and Data Science
3. Ethicist Pipeline and Career Trajectory
4. COVID-19
5. High Reliability in Clinical Ethics

Once again, the presentation format featured lightning talks. 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 three days, there were 29 presentations from 24 ethicists on topics ranging from crisis standards of care to creating

a shared call schedule for ethics consults throughout a health system. There were 59 attendees, more than double from the inaugural CHIEF.

The planning committee approached the transition to a virtual format with the intention to leverage the benefits of the technology while also making the conference engaging and faithful to its original intent and structure. The committee designed the structure ‘with the brain in mind.’² Thus, the committee preserved the lightning round presentations with Q&A sessions, but thematic breakout groups and “brain breaks” were introduced.

In addition, we were blessed that one of the presentations was a keynote from Johnny Cox, Ph.D. The committee’s intent behind introducing a keynote was to incorporate a more retreat-like atmosphere during the conference that encouraged prayer and introspection into an ethicist’s vocation. A hope for this keynote was that it not only spurred participants’ reflections on their own vocation, but also enriched the fellowship we have grown to appreciate and enjoy in this field. Specifically, we invited Dr. Cox to share a deep sense of the professional and spiritual dimensions of this work and how this wisdom might lead us through our careers. As the keynote took shape, it became clear that it was going to be a natural extension of Paul Wadell’s, “The Inner Life of Ethicists: The Importance of Cultivating an Interior Life,” which was first delivered at CHA’s annual Theology and Ethics Colloquium in 2019.³

Evaluation data indicate that CHIEF was once again a success. Survey respondents indicated that, on average, they would be likely to make changes to the ethics services at their respective organizations as a result of attending CHIEF. Such changes include but are not limited to developing formalized ethics education processes; articulating and using criteria on when to hire ethicists and structuring career pathways; and deepening the integration of ethics and mission formation. Generally, the quality and value of the CHIEF program and structure compared favorably to other professional events respondents attend. Overall, the experience of the virtual format of the CHIEF conference was viewed very positively by respondents. The one area where opportunity for improvement was most obvious was the newest addition: the thematic breakout sessions. Eighty-seven percent of respondents indicated they would attend CHIEF again in the future.

As with last year’s CHIEF, the Catholic Health Association offered to publish summaries of presentations in *Health Care Ethics USA* for presenters who wished to submit one. We look forward to holding CHIEF again this fall, and a day when we can once again meet in person with our colleagues.

Acknowledgements: *The Committee would like to extend special thanks to Katie Hoff (Ascension) for her assistance in designing the conference; to Russell Keithline (CommonSpirit Health) for his virtual hosting and technical skills; to Christopher Ostertag (Ascension) for his assistance*

in getting the conference designed and launched; and to Kelsi Charlesworth and Eileen Mooney (Providence) for their vigilant support, know-how, and can-do approach to collaboration and commitment to service excellence. The Committee also extends deep appreciation for the support and collaboration with the Catholic Health Association for CHIEF and the opportunity to publish papers presented during the conference.



ENDNOTES

1. For the inaugural CHIEF, see Gremmels, Becket, Nicholas Kockler, Kevin Murphy, and Mark Repenshek. "The Inaugural Catholic Healthcare Ethics Innovation Forum." *Health Care Ethics USA*, Winter-Spring 2020, 28:1.
2. For example, see David Rock, "Rethinking How We 'Conference'," [PsychologyToday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com), posted April 22, 2011, accessed January 25, 2021.
3. Paul J. Wadell, "The Inner Life of Ethicists: The Importance of Cultivating an Interior Life," *Health Care Ethics USA*, Spring 2019, 10-21.