



# Handbook for Health Care Ethics Committees

*Linda Farber Post, Jeffrey Blustein*

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The Joint Commission (TJC) accredits and certifies more than 19,000 health care organizations in the United States, including hospitals, nursing homes, and home care agencies. Each organization must have a standing health care ethics committee to maintain its status. These interdisciplinary committees are composed of physicians, nurses, attorneys, ethicists, administrators, and interested citizens. Their main function is to review and provide resolutions for specific, individual patient care problems. Many of these committees are well meaning but may lack the information, experience, skills, and formal background in bioethics needed to adequately negotiate the complex ethical issues that arise in clinical and organizational settings.

*Handbook for Health Care Ethics Committees* was the first book of its kind to address the myriad responsibilities faced by ethics committees, including education, case consultation, and policy development. Adopting an accessible tone and using a case study format, the authors explore serious issues involving informed consent and refusal, decision making and decisional capacity, truth telling, the end of life, palliative care, justice in and access to health care services, and organizational ethics.

The authors have thoroughly updated the content and expanded their focus in the second edition to include ethics committees in other clinical settings, such as long-term care facilities, small community hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and hospices. They have added three new chapters that address reproduction, disability, and the special needs of the elder population, and they provide additional specialized policies and procedures on the book's website. This guide is an essential resource for all health care ethics committee members.

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