

2020: MU Center for Health Ethics Response to COVID-19

Historical Documents

On August 9, 2010, the MU Center for Health Ethics (CHE) hosted a one-day symposium for an invited group of Missouri health ethics leaders. The symposium focused on developing public health policy regarding pandemic influenza preparedness and response. While that pandemic did not reach anticipated levels of impact, it has been instrumental in helping to prepare our communities across Missouri in responding to COVID-19. The related public health guidance document: *[Health Ethics Considerations: Planning for and Responding to Pandemic Influenza in Missouri](#)* is serving as a template for our updated response to the current situation. That document, along with other related resources, is available to the public through the MU Center for Health Ethics website.

Link below: <https://medicine.missouri.edu/centers-institutes-labs/health-ethics/pandemic-flu>

CHE Current Efforts

Clinical Ethics Consults: The MUHC Ethics Consultation service continues to provide 24/7 access to a clinical ethics consultant to support patients, their families, surrogates, and health care providers who need assistance in difficult decision making. This service includes working with clinical teams to address questions related to ethical response during a pandemic.

Organizational Policy: Members of our clinical ethics consultation service are actively participating in development of policies specific to maintaining high quality care in times of a pandemic.

COVID-19 ECHO: Lea Brandt, Director of the MU Center for Health Ethics is serving as a HUB team member for the COVID-19 ECHO that is meeting every Monday to address ongoing questions and review cases pertinent to the current pandemic response.

In addition to these current local initiatives, the CHE is in constant contact with the larger bioethics' community across our nation. This community has been sharing various resources on crisis standards of care, resource allocation, and triage decision making in the COVID19 pandemic. Many of those resources are listed below:

External Bioethics Resources

Triage

Matthew Wynia & John Hick STAT First Opinion article providing an overview of ethical principles and considerations in making triage decisions for COVID19: [If Covid-19 gets bad, triage will be needed. Are we ready for that?](#)

Truog, R. D., Mitchell, C., & Daley, G. Q. (2020). The Toughest Triage — Allocating Ventilators in a Pandemic. *New England Journal of Medicine*. doi:10.1056/NEJMp2005689. Available at: https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2005689?query=featured_home

Minnesota Department of Health clinical guidance on triage: [Patient Care Strategies for Scarce Resource Situations](#). This includes specific guidance for shortages of oxygen (section 1), hemodynamic support (section 5), ventilators (Section 6), and ECMO (section 12) among other resources

Guidance on ventilator allocation from the New York State Task Force on Life and the Law, New York State Department of Health (2015): [VENTILATOR ALLOCATION GUIDELINES](#)

Guidance on pandemic influenza from the Pandemic Influenza Ethics Initiative Work Group of the Veteran's Health Administration's National Center for Ethics in Health Care (2010): [MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF PANDEMIC INFLUENZA: ETHICAL GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS AND HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS IN THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION](#)

HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange (TRACIE) resource page on [crisis standards of care](#).

Institutional/hospital planning

Center to Advance Palliative Care COVID-19 Response Resources
<https://www.capc.org/toolkits/covid-19-response-resources/>

John Hick, Dan Hanfling, Matthew Wynia, & Andrew Pavia NASEM Perspective article on hospital planning for COVID-19 triage: [Duty to Plan: Health Care, Crisis Standards of Care, and Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2](#)

Guidance on hospital preparation from the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security: [What US Hospitals Should Do Now to Prepare for a COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Optimizing Surge Capacity: Hospital Assessment and Planning

This AHRQ issue brief discusses tools that can assist hospitals and other healthcare facilities with an assessment of their current capacity and develop a plan to achieve optimal surge capacity

Altered Standards of Care in Mass Casualty Events

This AHRQ report is a summary of findings that emerged from experts' discussion of the provision of health and medical care in a mass casualty event. It also includes recommendations for action that could be undertaken to support planning an effective response to a mass casualty event.

CDC page on [clinical guidance for state and local readiness](#).

Guidance on pandemic influenza from the Pandemic Influenza Ethics Initiative Work Group of the Veteran's Health Administration's National Center for Ethics in Health Care (2010): [MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF PANDEMIC INFLUENZA: ETHICAL GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS AND HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS IN THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION](#)

ASPR TRACIE resource page on [crisis standards of care](#).

Kaiser Health News article on the state-by-state nature of pandemic preparedness and response, with quotes from Matthew Wynia, John Hick, & James Hodge: [During A Pandemic, States' Patchwork Of Crisis Strategies Could Mean Uneven Care](#)

Clinical care, prognosis

Clinical research paper suggesting that older age, higher D-Dimer and higher SOFA score are correlated with higher mortality in COVID19 patients: [Clinical course and risk factors for mortality of adult inpatients with COVID-19 in Wuhan, China: a retrospective cohort study](#)

Some special issues related to pediatrics are described in this 2011 paper: [Ethical issues in pediatric emergency mass critical care](#)

Various issues (including those listed above)

[AMA Journal of Ethics COVID-19 Ethics Resource Center](#)

[The Medical Ethics of the Coronavirus Crisis](#), an article by Isaac Chotiner in *The New Yorker* with quotes from Christine Mitchell

Resources for explaining the pandemic

[Johns Hopkins Corona Virus Resource Center](#), including its Coronavirus COVID-19 Global Cases map

[Why outbreaks like coronavirus spread exponentially, and how to "flatten the curve,"](#) an article in the *Washington Post* by Harry Stevens with a simulation of virus spread

[Quarantined Italians' messages](#) to their earlier (10 days ago) selves and, by extension, to the rest of the world

Resources for psychosocial & emotional support

[Headspace](#) is offering free subscriptions to all US healthcare workers in 2020, given the circumstances. This is a mindfulness meditation app that comes highly recommended, though

not usually inexpensive. To redeem a free subscription, one must provide his/her state and NPI, name, and email address.

[Ten Percent Happier](#) is another program/app offering free access for health care workers, with a PROMO Code of HEALTHCARE (in ALL CAPS). One needs to download the app onto a mobile device—a desktop computer will not work—and must log into the app using the same method used to redeem access on the website. The company asks that no one create more than one account and cautions that the website has been overwhelmed, thus necessitating multiple attempts to redeem access.

Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague by Geraldine Brooks, described as “a tale of fragile hope pitted against overwhelming disaster” (by a [review](#) in the *The Guardian*) and based on the historical fact that in 1665, villagers in the Derbyshire town of Eyam, afflicted by the plague, voted to quarantine themselves so as not to spread the disease. Support a local independent bookstore that delivers and has curbside pick-up: [The White Whale](#), including [on-line bookshop](#).

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/23/opinion/coronavirus-hospital-shortage.html>