

# Clark County Public Health Ethics Committee Charter

*Last updated: June 16, 2014*

## Background/ Purpose

The Clark County Public Health (CCPH) Ethics Committee comprises a diverse group of community volunteers charged with:

- Providing guidance to CCPH staff, management, and community partners on ethical issues;
- Encouraging and supporting an institutional culture of ethical awareness and high ethical standards; and
- Providing a process of open and transparent decision making.

The Committee has representation from CCPH Leadership Team, staff, and management. There is also participation from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office and representation from the community. The Committee uses the Public Health Code of Ethics as a framework for conducting ethical analyses.

The Committee provides the administrative function of the ethical analyses. In addition, the Committee will meet regularly to:

- Continue education and training;
- Review suggested ethical dilemmas and determine if they are appropriate for analysis;
- Facilitate and/or participate in analyses with at least two Committee members at each analysis in addition to the facilitator;
- Prepare reports describing analyses outcomes and recommendations (reports will include all perspectives from the analysis);
- Coordinate reporting of ethical analyses, recommendations, and results back to participants.

To ensure an open and transparent process, key stakeholders will be invited to ethical analyses. When appropriate, the Committee may also invite non-stakeholders, such as content experts, to participate. All staff will have the responsibility of bringing ethical issues to the Committee. Committee members will ensure that managers and other staff with key information will be involved in determining whether to move forward with a full ethical analysis.

Once an ethical analysis has been completed, the Committee will submit a recommended course of action to CCPH Leadership Team. This recommendation will be supported with the results of the analysis and, therefore, will carry a high level of influence. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of CCPH Leadership Team to make the final policy decision and determine how to implement their decision(s).

This Charter currently addresses ethical analyses related to Clark County Public Health policies and operations. In the future if other regional partners adopt the ethical analysis charter and framework, recommendations based on the ethical analysis will go to the appropriate decision making body.

## Values

- Stakeholders will be invited to participate in ethical analyses to ensure transparency of process.
- Ethical analyses will focus on policy or operations and will not focus on individual or group behavior. Suspected unethical behavior on the part of an individual or group will be referred to the appropriate CCPH program manager or Leadership Team representative.
- Staff facilitating ethical analyses will have met basic training requirements as outlined in the training plan.
- CCPH will develop and support a culture that values high ethical awareness and standards.
- CCPH will be a leader in the field of public health for its efforts in organizational ethics.

## Ground Rules

- Committee members will be respectful of each other and of all participants.
- The Committee will be clear with staff and other participants about the level of confidentiality that can be practiced.
- The Committee will focus on policies, systems, and operations. Personnel issues are to be referred outside of the Committee.

- Committee members will respect decisions made when they are absent but may ask for reconsideration if strong objections.

### Existing Assumptions

- No additional resource allocations are available to the Committee.
- CCPH Leadership Team will respect and give strong consideration to Committee recommendations.
- Results of ethical analyses, including CCPH Leadership Team decisions, will be communicated back to all participants.

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### **Chair**

Organize, facilitate, and schedule meetings. Ensure that all members of the Committee have input and are equally valued.

#### **Prosecuting Attorney**

Provide the Committee with guidance regarding legal considerations and limitations.

#### **CCPH Leadership**

Act as a liaison to the CCPH Leadership Team and supplement training, and provide an understanding of departmental vision and direction.

#### **Committee Members**

Actively participate in trainings, ethical analyses, and team meetings. Committee members should also be willing to facilitate ethical analyses, model ethical standards, and contribute to the Committee's education and learning.

Note: Ethical analyses may also be facilitated by non-Committee members if they have met training criteria and have been authorized to do so by the Committee.