



Health Decisions

A publication of the Vermont Ethics Network
Working to increase awareness and understanding of ethical issues in health care

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Message from the Board Chair

Rev. Patrick McCoy

If you have sailed small boats, you might recognize this moment. Adrift on calm water, no breath of wind, sails slack, hull gently rocking, rudder limp under your hand. Then in the distance a stirring, a flickering darkness on the surface, coming quickly, and as it reaches the boat, a sudden freshening, as the sails snap to fullness, the hull heels and leaps to a new course, rudder and sheets straining against the energy of moving water and wind.

That transition from drift to swift, from the fluttering of slack sail to the excitement and energy of full ones is the experience of VEN over the past twelve months. As we wind up our fiscal year at the end of June, there is an exciting sense of movement, progress, and new horizons coming into view. Through the creativity, expertise, and hard work of our skipper, Executive Director Cindy Bruzzese, we have made great headway in our finances, fiscal management, planning, program, and communications.

Despite a very challenging fiscal environment owing to the general economic downturn, VEN was able to increase its operating budget by over 40% last year. This translated directly into an increase in programming and the expansion of our work into new areas of mission and partnership. Two outstanding examples of these fresh areas of service were the Palliative Care and Pain Management Summit in March, organized by VEN at the behest of the Vermont legislature, and the

May workshop on Medical Decision Making, which focused on decision-making in challenging clinical situations. Fulfillment of our long term commitment to the promotion of Advance Directives as a means to improve the recognition of individual values in health care has continued as well, with workshops, increased sales of *Taking Steps*, and coordination of the annual governor's proclamation with National Health Care Decisions Day. And VEN has continued to expand its activity in support of Vermont's community hospitals through the Rural Ethics Network, a VEN project that brings small hospital ethics committees together to improve ethics resources for the distinctive issues of rural health care.

At an increasing pace, VEN is seeing opportunities for partnerships with government, health care, community, and faith groups toward mutual goals of greater dignity, respect for choices, and improved quality in health care. We are excited by the opportunities, and we are challenged by the resources we will need to build in order to fulfill the mission that these opportunities present. Organizational partnerships and a growing community of donor support are the wind that fills our sails, and we're looking forward to building on our successes in the coming year to grow our capacity and move toward an even fuller realization of our promise. We're glad you're along for the journey.

Letter from the Executive Director Cindy Bruzzese

The impact of the Vermont Ethics Network is growing in leaps and bounds as we continue to expand our work throughout the state. This year, we embarked on initiatives seeking to better understand the current structure of palliative care and pain management services across our state, to improve understanding of medical decision making in challenging clinical and legal situations, to enhance the effectiveness of hospital ethics committees in rural settings through increased training and information sharing, and to continue to support Vermont citizens in planning for their future health care needs through the use of advance directives and the Vermont Advance Directive Registry. This ambitious work plan has set the stage for future programs and new initiatives—initiatives that will continue to be responsive to the changing landscape of our health care system and the needs of Vermonters.

One of the hallmarks of VEN's work has been our longstanding commitment to provide information and resources to individuals, health care providers and others about health care decision-making. Our booklet *Taking Steps* has been an invaluable resource to help individuals begin the sometimes difficult conversation with family and friends about planning for their future health care needs. This summer, a new resource will be available both on-line and in printed copy that is designed for those who are in the position of needing to make

medical decisions for someone else. *Making Medical Decisions for Someone Else: A Vermont Handbook* is a comprehensive guide to assist those individuals who are serving as health care agents, medical guardians or informal surrogates. It covers a broad range of topics and issues as well as questions that can arise when making health care decisions for someone else. We are very excited to be able to have this information accessible, free of charge, via the VEN website in late July.

Along with celebrating the availability of this new resource, next year we will also celebrate the 25th anniversary of Vermont Ethics Network. Looking back on the accomplishments of VEN, it is remarkable how far we have come and yet how much work still remains. The founding grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: "Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Pays, Who Decides?" was awarded to VEN 25 years ago to explore issues around the end of life. It is striking how relevant these questions still are today—25 years later. We are excited by the opportunity to continue this important dialog, and we look forward to ongoing engagement with individuals, organizations, health care providers and policy makers as we address these questions and the many new ones that lie ahead.

Cindy

New Ethics Resource

Robert Orr's long-awaited book, [Medical Ethics and the Faith Factor: A Handbook for Clergy and Health-Care Professionals](#) has been published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. It is a 500 page book on a multitude of topics in clinical ethics, illustrated with over 130 cases of real-life ethical dilemmas. It is available from the publisher (http://www.eerdmans.com/shop/product.asp?p_key=9780802864048) or from Amazon, Barnes & Nobel or Borders.

Dr. Orr was the director of Clinical Ethics at Fletcher Allen Health Care in Burlington for several years. He wrote the bulk of this book while serving as Scholar in Residence at the Kilns, the restored historic home of C.S. Lewis in Oxford, UK. He currently teaches clinical ethics at Loma Linda University (CA), the Graduate College of Union University (NY), and at Trinity International University (IL).

Day Long Training in Rural Ethics - September 8, 2010

In November of 2009, representatives from hospital ethics committees across Vermont met to discuss needs related to ethical issues that occur in rural settings. In an effort to support our ethics committees and be responsive to identified and emerging needs, the Vermont Ethics Network will host a day-long training in rural ethics at Gifford Medical Center.

The primary purpose of this workshop will be to enhance the effectiveness of rural ethics committees by promoting and clarifying ethical practices. Secondly, attendees will be able to use both the information presented and the extensive handout material as a resource at their own facilities for educational activities. The information and material can be used for local staff education and/or ethics committee member training--such as orientation for new members. The resource materials can be tailored to each institution and will be available on the VEN website www.vtethicnetwork.org.

The overarching goals for the day will be:

- To provide information to foster leadership support for ethics committees.
- To offer a rationale and strategies for a preventative approach to addressing recurring ethics conflicts.
- To present a model for addressing ethical conflict.
- To provide practical approaches and practical models for marketing the ethics committee within its own organization.
- To review strategies for enhancing the integration of ethics into the life of the organization.
- Wrap up.

William A. Nelson, PhD, Director of Rural Ethics Initiatives and Associate Professor of Community and Family Medicine and the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice at Dartmouth Medical School will facilitate this exciting professional development opportunity.

Save the Date!

The training will be held on September 8, 2010 at Gifford Medical Center. Further information on registration and continuing education credits will be available on the VEN website in late July. Please visit us online at www.vtethicsnetwork.org.

Meet VEN's Board

Christine Graham is a consultant focusing on fundraising planning and implementation, philanthropy, and the organizational issues that affect successful sustainability for nonprofits. She derives her experience through work as a development director, executive director, project developer and manager since 1968. Through CPG Enterprises, Inc., she consults with a wide range of community, regional and statewide organizations, primarily in northern New England. She has written several books related to fundraising, and was the founding editor of the Vermont and New Hampshire Directories of Foundations; she also edits a newsletter, Nonprofit Vermont. She is a frequent presenter at regional and national conferences, and teaches in two regional nonprofit management programs. She lives in Burlington, Vermont and maintains a second office in southern Vermont. Check her website at www.cpgfundraising.com.

Marilyn Hart, MD received her degree from the University of Pittsburgh and did her internship in internal medicine at Mary Hitchcock Hospital/Dartmouth Medical School and her residency in Internal Medicine at Mary Fletcher Hospital/University of Vermont School of Medicine. She is Board Certified in Hospice and Palliative Care and has been the Medical Director of Hospice for CVHHA since 1980. Marilyn is also the Chairman of the Medical Ethics Committee at CVMC and serves on the Palliative Care Committee. She is a Councilor of the Vermont Medical Society and has a private practice in internal medicine in the central Vermont area.

Jim Leddy served four terms in the Vermont Senate, including 2 terms as chair of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee. He was the lead sponsor of Vermont's health care reform legislation and was CEO of The Howard Center in Burlington from 1980 until 2000. He has served on a number of boards, including the University of Vermont. Presently, Jim serves as Vermont State President of AARP and as a member of AARP's National Policy Council.

Robert Macauley is Medical Director of Clinical Ethics at Fletcher Allen Health Care, and Clinical Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Vermont College of Medicine. He received his B.A. from Wheaton College and M.D. from Yale. Following residency training in pediatrics at Johns Hopkins, he was a pediatric hospitalist in Connecticut and Director of Pediatrics at Kuluva Hospital in Uganda, before coming to UVM in 2002. He also holds a Master of Studies in Philosophical Theology from Oxford University, and Masters of Divinity and of Sacred Theology from Yale Divinity School.

Dr. Macauley's work focuses on clinical ethics, pediatric palliative care, and spirituality. He directs the Clinical Ethics Consultation Service at Fletcher Allen Health Care as well as the ethics curriculum at the UVM College of Medicine, for which he received the Golden Apple Teaching Award. He has published articles on topics ranging from civil disobedience in the practice of medicine to the role of surrogate decision-making following a suicide attempt, in journals such as the *Hastings Center Report* and the *Journal of Clinical Ethics*. Dr. Macauley also directs the Pediatric Advanced Care Team at Vermont Children's Hospital as well as the "Spirituality in Patient Care" initiative at the College of Medicine, for which he received the George Washington Institute for Spirituality and Health Award for Curricular Development.

Thank You for Your Support!

Donations from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010

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Brattleboro Memorial Hospital
Copley Hospital
Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center
Fletcher Allen Health Care
Gifford Medical Center
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North Country Hospital
Rutland Regional Medical Center
Southwestern Vermont Medical Center
Springfield Hospital

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UVM Department of Nursing
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Agencies
Vermont Association of Hospitals and
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generous gifts.

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your name or not acknowledged you
in the manner you wished, please
accept our apology and contact us so
that we can correct our records.

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For your convenience, you will soon
be able to donate online. Be on the
lookout for the newly designed VEN
Website this summer!



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To:

Mark Your Calendars for These Events

September 8, 2010: Rural Ethics Day Long Training for Ethics Committee Members

Gifford Hospital 8:30 - 4:00.

Further information will be available in late July on the VEN website: www.vtethicnetwork.org.

Monday, October 4, 2010: VT and NH Ethics Meeting at DHMC

The 32nd Meeting of the VT and NH Hospital Ethics Committee Network. See link above for more information.

November 1st Bio Ethics Training Day

Monday, November 1, 2010 at DHMC, Auditoriums E & F.

Complete Your Advance Directive Today

Health Care Planning is For Everyone

- **TALK** to others about your values and future health care wishes.
- **GO** to www.vtethicsnetwork.org for the Vermont Advance Directive Forms and for comprehensive information about Advance Care Planning and Advance Directives.
- **COMPLETE** your Advance Directive.
- **REGISTER** your Advance Directive with the Vermont Advance Directive Registry - an easy and secure way to give your health care providers immediate access to your wishes about health care decisions.

For more information about the Vermont Ethics Network, or to order our *Taking Steps* Booklet, contact us by phone at 802.828.2909 or via e-mail at ven@vtethicsnetwork.org.