



Executive Summary and notes on the Florida Bioethics Network’s “Ethics Guidelines for Crisis Standards of Care in Public Health Emergencies”

April 2, 2020

The Florida Bioethics Network is a volunteer membership organization established 30 years ago. Members include nurses, physicians, social workers, clergy, lawyers, philosophers and others. Its missions include education programs and other professional development activities. Its advisory board is a subset of members. That board approved the “Ethics Guidelines for Crisis Standards” document. No FBN members are authorized to speak on behalf of any institution they might work or volunteer for, and any listing of members’ institutions is for identification purposes only.

The document provides what are regarded as ethically optimized guidelines for ventilator rationing and triage, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and other challenges faced in an emergency. They do not provide and should not be understood to provide legal advice. The following points may help inform use of the Guidelines.

1. The document neither requires nor forbids any action by a clinician.
2. It is subject to ongoing revision.
3. *The document is not ready-to-use.* It must be customized by any institution that chooses to adopt it. For instance,
 - Though an institution might adopt the overarching Guidelines, institutional leadership must specify when any of its particular provisions take effect. Thus, one might adopt the Guidelines on a Monday but not trigger the ventilator triage provisions until Saturday. Such triggers might need to be revised regularly.
 - Each institution will need to decide on the composition of a Triage Evidence Review Team; its scope, process and workflow; and a mechanism to communicate about its availability.
 - Specific ventilator triage criteria details might be modified. Pediatric institutions in particular will need to adopt appropriate metrics and scoring systems.
4. Institutions concerned about liability should seek appropriate legal and risk management support.

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