



# Handbook for Health Care Ethics Committees

By 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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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

A practical, readable, and informative guide, *Handbook for Health Care Ethics Committees* is full of well-chosen cases typical of the ones dealt with by ethics committees, sound scholarship, and analytical, lucid discussions.

(Kenneth Prager, Columbia University Medical Center)

Drawing from considerable expertise and experience, the authors write in a clear and engaging style... Essentially, the handbook creates a framework of resources for those committees assessing their own work. The authors serve their audience well and this book is a valuable addition to the library of every healthcare ethics committee.

(*Doody's Review Service*)

Straightforward writing, and generous use of case studies make it a book that any non-specialist with interest in the field would find compelling.

(*American Reference Books Annual*)

### Review

A strong work based on meticulous research and the wisdom of years of experience... Highly recommended.

(*Choice*)

Thick with useful information, this multifaceted handbook relays dispatches from the health care front... The authors have indeed met their goal and provided a needed resource.

(*Metapsychology*)

A very useful background tool for introductory instruction in bioethics... Does an excellent job.

(*Journal of Long Term Home Health Care*)

This easily readable, ethically astute book will be extremely useful to the providers in all clinical fields, not just those in pure medicine. It is a must-carry for all libraries covering health care services and human rights.

(*Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*)

### About the Author

**Linda Farber Post** is the director of bioethics at Hackensack University Medical Center and an associate professor at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School and St. Georges University School of Medicine. **Jeffrey Blustein** is the Arthur Zitrin Professor of Bioethics and a professor of philosophy at the City College of New York.

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