



When to Hire an Ethicist

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Thanks to Mark Repenshek
for review and input

- Many healthcare professions have staffing guidelines to determine when to hire for a position
- No organization has any recommendations when to hire an ethicist at the facility or regional level
 - CHA recommends one at system level (*Striving for Excellence in Ethics*)
- Guidance would help determine if to hire, where to place
- These recommendations loosely based on literature, mostly on experience, all open to discussion

Ethics Staffing Guidelines



Necessary

(any one of these indicates a serious need)

Element	Metric
Bed count*	≥ 350
Average daily census†	≥ 250
ICU beds (excluding NICU)	≥ 50
Trauma	Level 1

* Some evidence shows consult volume jumps 67% at 300 beds (Fox et al., *AJOB*, 7:2, 2007.), experience suggests 400, so I split the difference

† ADC seems a more reliable metric as bed counts often do not reflect patient volume

Strongly Recommended

(any of the following and at least one criteria from the Conditional list indicate a strong need)

Element	Metric
Case Mix Index	≥ 1.7
Specialty service line with high acuity	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. NICU – Level 32. Burn Center3. Pediatric hospital4. Fetal surgery5. MFM program6. Transplant program
Clinical research	≥ 100 protocols open annually in ≥ 3 disciplines
Insurance	$\geq 50\%$ Medicare patients

Ethics Staffing Guidelines



Conditional

(3 or more criteria indicate a strong need, 2 or more warrant serious consideration)

Element	Metric
Residency program	Medical, Pharmacy, or Chaplain
Clinic volume	$\geq 65,000$ patient encounters per year or $\geq 5,000$ Medicare patients
Cancer center	$\geq 7,000$ patient visits per year
Deliveries	$\geq 3,000$ per year
Palliative Care	Median penetration rate or higher (CAPC) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• < 150 beds, 343 consults per year• 150-499 beds, 718 consults per year• > 500 beds, 1,874 consults per year
Ethics Consult Volume	≥ 100 per year
Specialty services	1. Phase 1 clinical trials 4. Outpatient dialysis 7. ACO 2. Inpatient psych 5. Inpatient renal unit 3. Neurosurgery 6. LTACH
Region size	3 hospitals between 200 and 350 beds and ≤ 1 hour drive from each other