

# How the 'Complex Care Team' Supports Ethics in Complex Cases

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- Often ethics is the 'call of last resort'
- Even embedded ethicists, working proactively, have cases that become unwieldy with elements beyond the purview of ethics
- Or the ethicists' recommendation is one that the physician believes will leave her out on a limb and she wants organizational support
- The 'Complex Care Team' at Mercy developed as a result of cases often labelled as 'train wrecks' and those where ethics' advice pushed cultural change



# Complex Care Team @ Mercy

## Purpose

- To promote procedures to proactively identify potential problems,
- To facilitate the removal of barriers to safe, effective, appropriate, and ethical care of patients, and
- To support health care team members with extremely complex medical and social issues of patients and their families

## Membership

- Senior leadership (both administrative & clinical), chairs of critical care & hospitalists, nursing leaders, care management, mission, ethics, legal, pastoral care and members of health care team (& others apropos of the case)
- Important that the Complex Care Team is owned by senior leadership, i.e. it is **not** owned by the ethicist or seen as an ethics committee

# Process

- **Weekly** standing meeting; case must be submitted on 'Discussion Guide' 4 hours before meeting, ideally by attending physician
- PCP is included if at all possible, often via phone
- Mechanisms developed to provide clear and consistent communication among care team, patients, and their families, e.g., Strategy of Care note, clearly flagged on front of chart which informs current and future caregivers of an agreed upon plan of care.

The screenshot displays the Epic EHR interface for a patient named Robert S. Dupar. The patient's profile includes demographic information (Male, 71 years old, born 07/1940), medical history (Allergies: Peanut), and current status (Inpatient). A red box highlights the 'Strategy of Care' note in the patient's profile section. Another red box highlights the 'Patient Chart Advisories' sidebar on the right, which contains a warning: 'Patient has an PVI of type-Strategy of Care'. The main chart area shows various sections like 'Code Status Information', 'Patient Infection Status', and 'Orders Needing Co-sign'. A red circle with the number '13' is overlaid on the chart, and a red arrow points from it to the 'Patient Chart Advisories' sidebar.