Role Play - Support Group for Patients and Families

Last week, a fire broke out in the operating room at a local ambulatory surgery center. Unfortunately, the fire quickly engulfed adjoining operating rooms and the waiting room due to faulty wiring. Over 50 people were injured. As the closest emergency department, many of them were admitted to your hospital.

The patients and family members have leaned heavily on the chaplains for support. Several family members also started an informal support group. They have had a few meetings in the cafeteria and waiting room, but they ask to use a conference room and for the chaplains to attend.

The hospital's attorney strongly advises against this. The hospital is a minority owner of the surgery center and could be named in a lawsuit about the fire. Plaintiff's attorneys could secretly send someone to observe the meetings since what is said there is discoverable.

Yet, the physicians believe the support group is vital for the patients' care and healing process, and care of the whole person. They point out that the hospital does not operate or manage the surgery center, and the manufacturer of the wiring is to blame. They think the attorney is dictating their practice of medicine.

The executive team meets to discuss how to respond to the request and there is significant disagreement among them. The CNO suggests using the Ethics Discernment Framework and they agree to meet the next morning for a facilitated discernment. The Mission leader requests a facilitator from another ministry so they can be free to be a participant.