



COVENANT HEALTH ETHICS CENTRE
SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES
2019-2020





FROM THE CHIEF MISSION AND ETHICS OFFICER

I am pleased to present this report on Covenant Health's ethics services for 2019-2020. At the time of this writing, the organization, like every other health care organization in the world, is in the midst of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting all levels of clinical care and service, including our people and teams. The ethical issues underlying every operational decision have never been more evident, as we strive to balance benefits and risks, allocate limited resources, and remain faithful to our values.

While we have been challenged, I am equally honoured to highlight the many ways in which our people have demonstrated our commitment to ethical integrity. This is why in this report, you will see that Covenant Health was again recognized by the Ethisphere® Institute as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for the fifth year in a row.

Covenant Health's commitment to ethics is intentional, requiring ongoing attention to building capacity for ethical reflection and discernment through all levels of the organization. This remains a focus under Covenant Health's People and Culture Strategy, as well as priority for the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada as we anticipate a shortage in national ethics leadership in the near future. To that end, I am delighted to highlight the significant contribution of the Leadership Challenge cohort this year who reviewed and developed concrete recommendations to continually elevate ethics performance at Covenant Health, positioning us for the future.

While COVID-19 has challenged us, it has not defined us, and we have all to be grateful to all our staff and teams for doing the right thing and making sound ethical decisions for those we serve.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Diversity and inclusion are the heart of Catholic healthcare, which has a long tradition in providing quality, compassionate care to all individuals. This is reflected in Covenant Health’s commitment to serving people of all faiths, culture, and circumstances, according to our values. This commitment to embracing diversity and promoting inclusive practices also extends to our staff, physicians and volunteers, who equally represent a rich mosaic of cultures and backgrounds.

Covenant Health has refreshed our Diversity and Inclusion framework and work plan, under the guidance of the Diversity and Inclusion Council. The objectives and initiatives fall under 4 main categories:

- 1. Supporting those we serve;**
- 2. Supporting our teams;**
- 3. Strengthening and expanding community partnerships;**
- 4. Committing to Indigenous health and awareness.**

Over the past year Covenant Health has successfully launched 8 Indigenous Health and Awareness modules in partnership with AHS to high participation rates and positive feedback. Additionally, a revised educational module which supports the overall framework and work plan will be released in 2020. We are proud of the number of initiatives we have achieved over the past several years such as the introduction of video exchange Interpretive Services, and participating in multicultural workshop retreats. We know that by continuing to foster a diverse and inclusive environment, we benefit our teams, patients, residents and the community.

ETHISPHERE

Covenant Health was once again recognized for our ethical commitment by the Ethisphere® Institute, a global leader in defining and advancing the standards of ethical business practices. This marks the fifth consecutive year (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020) that the Ethisphere Institute has designated our organization as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies. Covenant Health is the only Canadian healthcare provider to ever receive this recognition.

Ethisphere ranks and benchmarks participating companies from around the world against a comprehensive set of ethics standards and leading compliance business best practices. Covenant Health voluntarily participates in Ethisphere as a way of raising the bar of our ethical culture. We want to know what we are doing well and where we can improve clinical and organizational ethical practices and we deem it a value-add investment in being benchmarked against other leading organizations around the world. It is a tremendous honour to be designated by Ethisphere and as an organization it is an achievement that we celebrate, and an opportunity to drive quality improvement. The designation is a testament to Covenant Health's commitment to improve clinical and organizational ethical practices.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING (MAID)

Covenant Health is closely monitoring proposed legislative changes to existing language in Canada's Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) law. This follows a Fall 2019 Quebec court decision regarding amendments to the "reasonable foreseeability" criteria in which the Federal government elected not to appeal. Besides the elimination of reasonable foreseeability as a requirement, Bill C-7 proposes to allow a limited form of advance directive for those who lose capacity as part of their disease process while, at the same time, clarifying that mental health does not qualify as a sole underlying condition for MAID.

While the full societal impact of these potential changes is not entirely clear, Covenant Health has long anticipated that expanding the eligibility criteria will introduce new ethical and legal questions, prompting in part Covenant Health's earlier submission to the Council of Canadian Academies, and the need for stronger safeguards. Current advocacy work with Catholic Health Alliance of Canada partners has focused on institutional claims to religious rights and freedom and conscience protection under the Charter, including ongoing moral and ethical analyses.

CAPACITY BUILDING

In keeping with our People and Culture Strategy, Covenant Health is committed to strengthening capacity for ethical reflection and discernment. One of the ways in which this can be achieved is by enhancing support systems and resources for our teams and the community. As part of this commitment, Covenant Health is currently reviewing the Ethics Centre website, which offers a range of ethics services to patients, residents, family members, staff, physicians, administrators and students. These services include education, policy consultation and development, coaching and formal ethics consultation. By strengthening and expanding services offered through the Ethics Centre, Covenant Health deepens its commitment to clinical and organizational ethics.



Rural Leaders Ethics Forum

Covenant Health Rural Leaders Ethics Forum

“Well done rural forum for all. All participants were engaged and a great discussion was had. I came away feeling motivated to help build the ethics capacity in my teams to facilitate better care for those we serve”

(Forum participant)

Following the enthusiastic reception of the 2018 Forum, the Ethics Centre, in conjunction with Covenant Health’s Rural Health Services, hosted the 2019 Covenant Health Rural Leaders Ethics Forum once again in Red Deer, Alberta.

This fiscal year, the Forum focused on ethics issues surrounding end-of-life and ethics capacity development in rural health leadership. Topics included Palliative Care, Medical Assistance in Dying, Goals of Care Designation orders and fostering ethical culture and leadership. We are grateful to our presenters for their timely and practical presentations, and to our many corporate services display presenters for their thoughtful engagement with forum participants.

National

In the summer of 2018, the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada undertook a study of the ethics capacity of Catholic health care organizations across Canada. The study, building on a prior 2009 review, showed a growing and urgent need for investment in ethics resources—including the development of ethicists, strengthening mission-aligned organizational cultures, and integrative ethics education and tools. This document can be found at www.covenanthealth.ca/media/125008/chac-ethics-capacity-report-distribution-to-the-ethics-network.pdf.

The CHAC's 2018 work reflected ongoing awareness and efforts underway within Covenant Health. In June 2019 a diverse group of leaders from Covenant Health, Covenant Care and Covenant Living began The Leadership Challenge—Covenant Health's leadership development program. From this group of nearly 30 leaders, a team of six was assigned the daunting task of exploring how to strengthen and deepen capacity for ethical reflection and discernment within Covenant Health's spheres of influence.

Over the course of eight months this team reviewed, researched and analyzed all aspects of the Ethics Centre's work and influence. The importance of their work cannot be underestimated and we are grateful for their and the organization's investment in ongoing work of deepening capacity for ethical reflection within the Covenant family.

Notable work by this group includes:

- Stakeholder consultation and environmental scan of Catholic and non-catholic ethics centers and departments across Canada
- Digital audit outlining recommendations for enhancing web-based resources and expanding the Ethics Centre's virtual presence and influence
- Survey of Covenant Health ethics committee chairpersons and members. Audit of ethics committee structures and processes.
- A draft report outlining key recommendations and strategy to effectively leverage existing resources to enhance capacity for ethical reflection and discernment
- Observer participation in Covenant Health's Accreditation Canada in-person surveyor meeting with representatives of the Ethics Centre

“The opportunity to really understand Covenant Health’s unique culture related to ethical reflection and discernment was amazing. We were exposed to how the mission, vision and values deeply influence decision making in the organization.”

The Meeting Waters - Laurie Taylor

Ethics Fall Retreat 2019

In the Fall of 2019, the Ethics Centre hosted a retreat titled “Ethics and Addictions”, organized to better equip the Edmonton Area Ethics Committee members in responding to ethics consults relating to addictions. The retreat’s objectives were aimed at

- Increasing our understanding of the myths and misconceptions about addictions, the pathways to addictions, and the perspectives of people who live with addictions;
- Engaging with thought tools from philosophy to strengthen our ethical reflections;
- Increasing our knowledge of local resources to assist those we serve.

The event featured 3 lectures, 2 panel group discussions and a table discussion. While the retreat focused on equipping committee members, it showcased a wide range of available community programs and resources tackling addictions. Very knowledgeable local presenters were drawn from organizations such as Covenant Health, Alberta Health Services, Boyle McCauley Health Centre and AAWEAR (Alberta Addicts Who Educate and Advocate Responsibly) to present on the topic.



Some Ethics Retreat 2019 Presenters, Panelists and Organizers

A highlight of the retreat for one attendee was “gaining a greater awareness of living with addictions and seeing the compassionate approach to care modeled by the panel members”



Mission Awards recipients 2019

A FEW 2019-2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Mission Awards

At the annual Covenant Health Mission Awards ceremony 2019, Dr. Eleanor Stewart, (Clinical Ethicist with the Ethics Centre) was recognized for her exemplary commitment to Social Justice. In the picture below, colleagues Ogechukwu Ezeh and Jon Gilchrist (on the left in the front and back rows) accepted the award on her behalf.

Health Ethics Week

The 2019 National Health Ethics Week was celebrated the week of April 1-7 2019. Highlights of the week included:

- A webinar presentation by Ethics staff, Jon Gilchrist at the John Dossestor Health Ethics Centre, University of Alberta on “The use of deception in dementia care” ;
- A visit to the Prenatal and Antenatal units at the Grey Nuns Community Hospital, Edmonton to talk about ethics; and
- Ethics interaction with staff, which included a question and answer session at the Misericordia Community Hospital cafeteria.



Health Ethics Week

DID YOU KNOW...

That the Ethics Centre supports families and care teams with several clinical ethics services that include education, policy information, clinician ‘coaching’ and formal clinical ethics consultation?

That the Centre also facilitates organizational ethics consultation and mission discernment for clinical and administrative managers and corporate leaders?

That anyone may request an ethics consultation: patients, family members, health care team members, staff, physicians and administrators?

That care teams benefit from a “debriefing” session with a member of the Ethics Centre after an ethically challenging clinical situation?

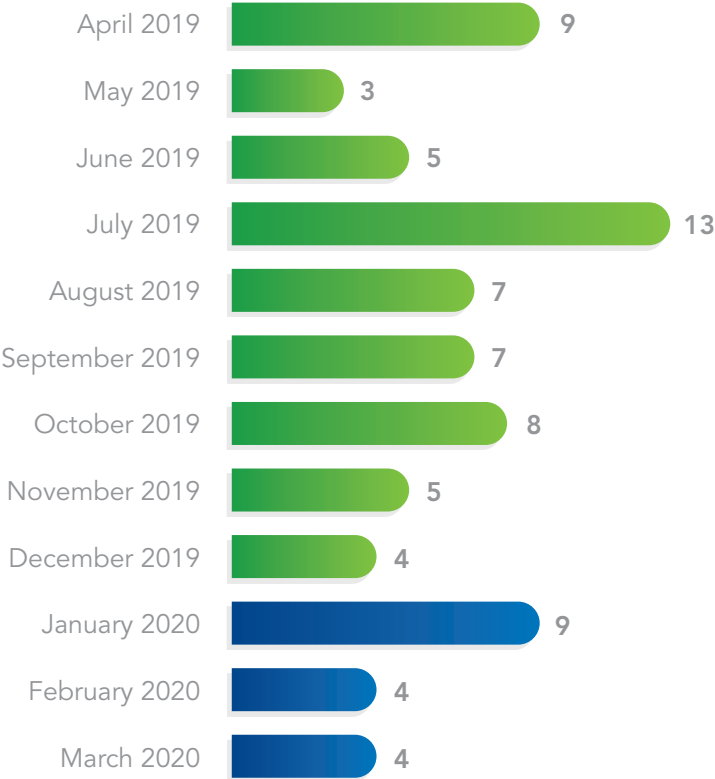
That the Ethics Centre team supports individuals and teams working through difficult situations using a step-by-step, clear and reasoned process?

That when there is a conflict or uncertainty about the best thing to do, the Ethics team provides support in making decisions?

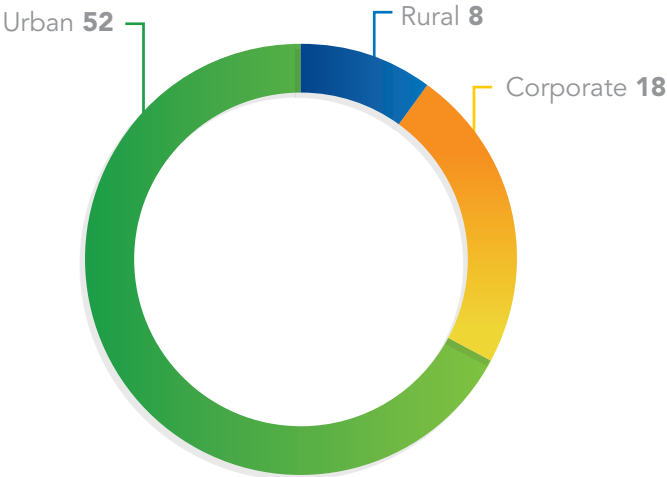
ETHICS CONSULTATION SERVICES

The core business of the Ethics Centre continues to be our 24-hour, province-wide ethics consultation service. Clinical ethics consultations contain structured discussions led by a member of the ethics team. Consultations are guided by Covenant Health’s ethical decision-making framework, and the Health Ethics Guide. The data below reflects consultation services undertaken by the Ethics Centre in this fiscal year.

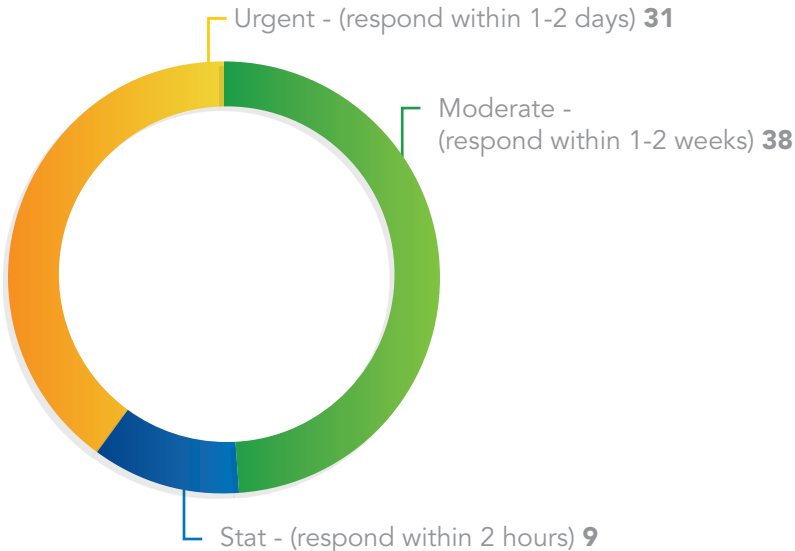
Requested Consultations by Month



Consultation Requests by Location



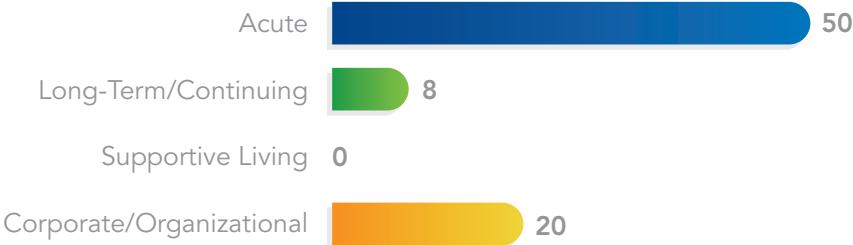
Consultation by Urgency



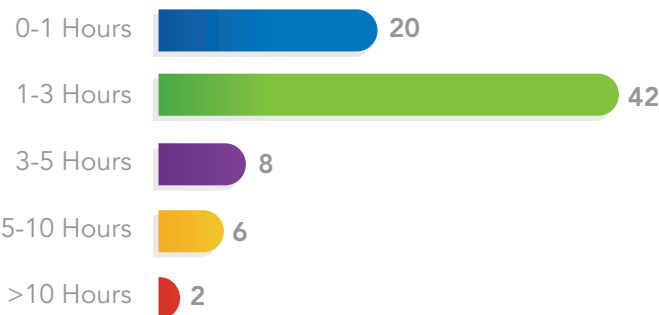
Consultation requests by Type of support provided



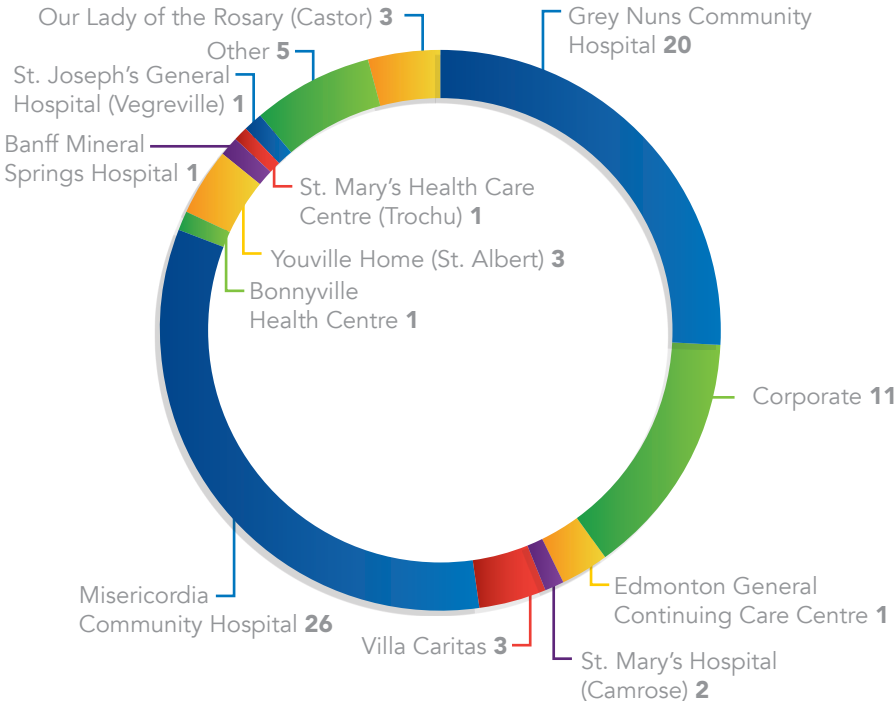
Consultation Requests by Care Category



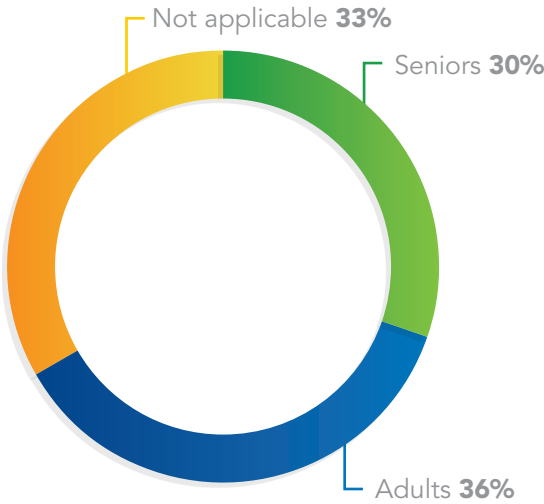
Consultation Requests by Total Time Spent



Consultation Requests by Facility



Population





ETHICS COMMITTEES

Covenant Health's five ethics committees are an essential pillar undergirding the Ethics Centre's day-to-day support of point of care clinicians, administrators and patients, residents and families. The more than 55 volunteer members from our various committees are passionate about developing their own ethical leadership and cultivating meaningful ethics supports for their colleagues across the province.

Spotlight Experience

Sandy Penrose - Community Member, Banff Mineral Springs Hospital (MSH) Ethics Committee:

"Being a community member of the MSH ethics committee has been an invaluable learning experience. Sharing and appreciating different perspectives through an ethics lens enabled me to appreciate that often, there is not a single right solution to a dilemma. In our public forums and through community interaction we strive to demonstrate how recognizing and respecting the needs of individuals contributes to the complexity of decision making in health care. Raising awareness within the community for this type of reflective process will hopefully generate increased understanding and support for each other and medical care practices".

Nicholas Wasylowich – Chaplain, St. Mary's Health Care Centre Trochu:

"Building a culture of ethics is vital to holding up our values at Covenant Health. As we struggle with the questions of life in a health care setting we not only reflect on our six core values, ethics gives us an opportunity to practice them."

Anita Layh, Manager Hospitality Services, Bonnyville Health Centre:

"When asked what I value about participating in the Rural Ethics Network; so many things come to mind. The most valued of all of them (for me), would be learning the ability to step out of my shoes for a moment and look at things from an entirely different perspective. By listening in on calls, participating in consults, and attending various educational retreats; the Ethics Network has really helped me to see beyond what my own personal biases and experiences are, to truly "look" at a situation or scenario and be able to do so objectively for the collective good of all involved. I am increasingly grateful for this ability to learn and train in order to be of further service to the multi disciplines; patients, residents and families with whom we serve. Learning to understand complexities, weigh moral obligations versus feelings, intuitions and provider "ickiness" has been so beneficial for me. It is, after all, one of my most treasured aspects of working with a Catholic Organization. Our Mission Statement reads, "We are called to continue the healing ministry of Jesus by serving with compassion, upholding the sacredness of life in all stages, and caring for the whole person – body, mind and soul". The body is the easy part, (most of the time); but the mind and soul are a lot trickier. My time spent on the Rural Ethics Network has allowed me to take the blinders off and dig into matters that are not so easily diagnosable and treatable. There was so much that I was unaware of in this realm of "caring" for all those we serve. I am enjoying expanding my capabilities by learning the techniques used when discerning and discussing matters of "ethical" importance. It is yet another of the great tools Covenant Health offers to Leaders in order to be our best selves and do our best work possible. Jon, Oge and Eleanor are fantastic teachers; the team is a wonderful asset. I hope one day, to be as fluent with the skills that they are teaching; as they are at putting them into practice".



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

March 2020 included the formal launch of Covenant Health's response to COVID-19. In step with Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services, Covenant Health continues to address a wide range of clinical, operational and administrative challenges. One particular area that is marked by sensitive and ethically difficult decision-making is the care and treatment of seniors in long term care environments. Chief among the issues with which care teams are grappling is 'visitor restrictions'.

In addition to supporting these very difficult situations, the Ethics Centre is offering supports in several other areas and by various means, including:

- Responding to clinical and organizational ethics consultation requests arising from COVID-19 related issues.
- Creation of a COVID-19 ethics resource section on the Ethics Centre webpage
- Participation on Covenant Health's People Oversight Committee
- Written contributions to Covenant Health's Vital Beat newsletter regarding moral distress in the time of pandemic.
- A new weekly ethics column titled "What Did I Sign Up For?" that focuses on new and emerging practice issues related to pandemic challenges.
- Participation in monitoring and addressing emerging ethics trends as part of Alberta Health Services Rapid Response Ethics Consultation Team
- Enhancing capacity for ethical consultation across the organization by establishing a volunteer Provincial On-call Ethics Consultation Team.
- Contributing to the development of ethics guidance documents through the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada's Ethicist Network

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

Ethics centre staff members:

Dr. Gordon Self Jon Gilchrist
Dr. Eleanor Stewart Ogechukwu Ezeh

Covenant Health Rural Ethics Network:

Anita Layh Krista Bilyk Richard Anstey
Charlotte Ewanowich Laurel Wyllie Shawn Huculak
Jim Wilson Nicholas Wasylowich Sherry Lucas
Kim Weinkauf D. Reno Guimond William Patterson

Bonnyville ethics committee:

Alena Thompson Elizabeth Moon Sherry Lucas
Anita Layh Leah Synowec J. William Patterson

Banff Mineral Springs Hospital Ethics Committee:

Amberle Bocsy Nancy Barnes Sandy Penrose
Dr. Dino Smiljic Nancy Cowtun Shelley Buchan
Margie Smith Paula Storie Tamara Wewetzer
Mette Peterson Peter Baylis

Camrose Ethics Committee:

Cathy Turn Karen Burton Peggy Grundberg
Cherylyn Antymniuk Kathy Henderson Shelly Dalueg
Glenda Shiell Kendra Ferguson Sherry Schneider
Jim Wilson Kim Roberts A. Warren Lindberg
Joann Reinhart Kyla Joyce Mandy Megan Conyers-
Joyce Pring Melissa Berg Smith

Edmonton Area Clinical Ethics Committee Members:

Barbara Roemer Jane Christensen Manju Seeger
Beryl Parsons Jon Gilchrist Meg Hagerty
Bonne Tejada Josh Stachniak Oksana Antonyk
Caitlin Congdon Katrina Damer Oge Ezeh
Deborah Kirkpatrick Kelly Strand Ralph Magnus
Donna Brown Kris Gray Sandy Ayre
Eleanor Stewart Lindsay Carter Scott Stewart
Gordon Self Lora Maygard Sheri McKenzie
Heather Gallant Mark Vigrass

Mission, Ethics And Spirituality Portfolio

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Ebelina Werter | Salima Mohamed | Karen Hansen |
| Gretel Pepper | Bonnie Tejada | Dr. Gordon Self |
| Sairah Jacob-Scaria | Ralph Magnus | |
| Meaghan Ellis | Jane Christensen | |

Provincial On-Call Ethics Team (POET)

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Anita Layh | Jane Christensen | Oge Ezeh |
| Bonnie Tejada | Jon Gilchrist | Peter Baylis |
| Dr. Dino Smiljic | Lindsay McCaughey | Scott Stewart |
| Dr. Eleanor Stewart | Nicholas Wasylowich | |

The Steering Committee, Oral & Booth Presenters At The Rural Leaders Ethics Forum

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Cory Kormant | Carleen Brenneis | Sharna Polard |
| Evelyn Myles | Dr. Gordon Self | Teresa Schaub |
| Joel Weaver | Dr. Jessica Simon | Carleen Brenneis |
| Jon Gilchrist | Joy Hurst | Joy Hurst |
| Nicholas Wasylowich | Dr. Eleanor Stewart | Marlene Varga |
| Sheli Murphy | Jon Gilchrist | Kristin Christensen |
| Sherry Lucas | Alicia Johnson | Barb Roemer |
| Oge Ezeh | Karen Hansen | Marlynn Braithwaite |
| Irene Gates | Elise Kammerer | Ralph Magnus |
| Martina Soderquist | Shanika Baptiste | |

The Steering Committee & Presenters At The 2019 Fall Retreat

| | | |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Edmonton Area Ethics Committee Members | Shanell Twain | Jennifer McLaren |
| Dr. Mat Rose | Erica Schoen | Deb Chalupa |
| | Dr. Neil Parker | |

Communications And Community Engagement

The Communications and community engagement team



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