



News Release

Center, LINC collaborate on quality/ethics initiative for long-term care

State of Missouri supports with \$75,000

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When Edith J fell for the third time, family members threatened to report the facility. The staff who had cared for Edith for more than a decade were just as concerned for her health as her family, but the cantankerous octogenarian was not about to cooperate with anyone.

How should this situation be resolved?

This type of scenario is repeated almost daily in assisted and long-term care facilities throughout Missouri. Too often, these situations devolve into disputes involving the courts and the state.

Now for some there is hope of relief. Following a year's worth of preparation with state of Missouri officials in a variety of departments, a quality initiative is underway to address, avoid and resolve such issues in long-term care facilities in five counties in the Kansas City area and across the state. The initiative involves the Center for Practical Bioethics and the Local Investment Commission (LINC), funded in part by \$75,000 from the State of Missouri's Department of Social Services.

"The Center has a long history of advocating for ethical decision making in long-term care," says Don Reynolds, *Caring Connections* program director at the Center. "Through our Long Term Care Ethics Consortium, the Center has provided guidance and resources to long-term care professionals and families to work through difficult dilemmas."

The initiative will provide ethics case consultation, education and training and policy guidance for families and long term care professionals. While the focus of the work will be on participating facilities located in Jackson, Platte, Cass, Clay and Ray counties, the benefits will be felt throughout the state.

- Consultations will be delivered in person, via conference call, or electronically when rapid responses are required in cases involving a consulting physician.
- Staff training materials will be developed and provided to skilled nursing and intermediate care facilities.
- In addition, the Center will develop and disseminate statewide policy guidance on such issues as activation of advance directives, the needs for expressions of intimacy, and surrogate healthcare decision making.

The pilot project's success will be measured by quality improvement techniques that check with facility staff and regulators who monitor the incidence and recurrence of ethical issues that often lead to conflict, especially during the difficult and emotionally trying times at the end of life. To access this service, call the Center for Practical Bioethics at (816)221-1100 and ask for Don Reynolds at extension 217.

Founded in 1984, the Center for Practical Bioethics is an independent organization nationally recognized for its work in practical bioethics. More than a think tank, the Center puts theory into action to help people and organizations find real-world solutions to complex issues in health and healthcare.

Founded in 1992, LINC is a Kansas City-based non-profit that works to improve social services for children and families. It is the state's formal community partnership and works closely with the Missouri Dept. of Social Services and other state agencies.