



The Bioethics Bulletin

August 25, 2026

Make sure you receive this newsletter by adding info@practicalbioethics.org to your Safe Sender, White List or Address Book.

Breakfast of Champions

Sponsorships start at \$500. Individual Tickets Free.

**Together we can make vital ethics services
accessible in our community.**

When lives hang in the balance, families are frightened, and clinicians are stretched to their limits, knowing the right thing to do has never felt harder. **Ethics consultations bring clarity – and a process everyone can trust.**

Join us in bringing the healthcare community together. Honor Ethics Champion Dr. Namir Khandker.



Help raise funds for
175 ethics consultations
that will support up to
875 patients, families and care teams.

Visit Sporting Park and help us reach this goal!
All proceeds support the Center for Practical Bioethics.

REGISTER NOW

Ethics Champion 2026

Ochsner Medical Center Doctor Leads with Proactive Approach to Ethics

“It was a crazy situation,” recalls Dr. Namir Khandker when in March 2020, two years after completing his neurocritical care fellowship, Covid hit. “People were dying left and right. All elective surgeries were cancelled. I had experienced surgeons rounding on patients reporting to me.”



Dr. Khandker helped renew the hospital’s ethics committee and has led it ever since. “What makes Namir stand out,” says the Center’s VP of Ethics Services, Ryan Pferdehirt, is his proactive approach to ethics. Dr. Khandker gets the Center engaged as a trusted partner in early decision making rather than as an eleventh-hour solution.”

Read the full story about Dr. Khandker! Join us in honoring him on September 17 at Breakfast of Champions.

[READ NOW](#)

A Clinical Ethics Partnership

Good for Patients. Good for Staff. Good for BJC Saint Luke’s.

The Rev. Susan Roberts, MDiv, BCC, Senior Manager of Spiritual Wellness at BJC Saint Luke’s (formerly Saint Luke’s Health System), will be the keynote speaker Breakfast of Champions on September 17.

Read about Rev. Roberts and register for Breakfast of Champions to hear Rev. Roberts on how the Center’s partnership with BJC Saint Luke’s supports her, the 25 chaplains she oversees, as well as clinicians and patients.

[READ BLOG](#)

Nonbeneficial treatment. Organ transplantation. Loss of trust. **CPB Experts Talk Straight about Healthcare**

Non-beneficial treatment. Organ transplantation. Loss of trust. These are a few of the topics CPB speakers have recently spoken about at conferences and workshops.

[The Midwest Transplant Network](#) – and Organ Transplant Organization (OPO) serving Kansas and Western Missouri – needed a keynote speaker for three sessions of its 2026 Critical Care Donation Symposium focused on improving program performance across the continuum of care.

[The Mission Vision Project KC](#) invited us to speak at the Linda Hall Library in Kansas City about how medical ethics principles and practices can help to overcome loss of trust in medicine.

Next time your organization needs a healthcare ethics presentation, contact Cassandra Shaffer Johnson at cshafferjohnson@PracticalBioethics.org to discuss how we can help.

Clinical Ethics Resources

The Ethics Dispatch

The *Ethics Dispatch* newsletter is a benefit we provide partner organizations and make available to all in the Bulletin. For information about how your organization can receive all the benefits of partnership, including the *Dispatch* and Ethics Committee Consortium membership, please contact Cassandra Shaffer Johnson at cshafferjohnson@PracticalBioethics.org

When Children Become Pawns

The Human Cost of the Florida Vaccine Dispute

Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier recently warned the Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops that Catholic schools could jeopardize their eligibility for state scholarship programs if they refuse to grant religious exemptions from school vaccination requirements. Cassie examines what happens to children and families caught in the middle.



We have a case study to share about a 56-year old man with end-stage renal disease whose brother is hesitating to donate a kidney, and Ryan Pferdehirt's ethical musings about the meaning of sacrifice.

[READ THE DISPATCH](#)

REVIEW: Screening Bioethics – EPISODE 2

Depictions of Death & Dying Decisions

After screening five clips, Screening Bioethics webinar series hosts Kayhan Parsi and Nanette Elster suggested that the common thread in all three shows is patients making end-of-life decisions autonomously with a trusted family member or friend to support them.



Roxie in *The Pitt* had a death doula, as well as her husband and children. Molly in *Dying for Sex* had her best friend Nikki, a compassionate physician, and an enthusiastic hospice worker. Deborah in *Hacks* had her writer-turned-best-friend Ava.



Discussion moderated by Stephanie Van Slyke homed in on the role of and growing interest in death doulas, misconceptions around the use of drugs to alleviate pain at the end of life, physician skill in breaking bad news to patients, the need to demystify dying, and the importance of allowing the dying to do it on their own terms.



Mark October 1 on your calendar to join us for Episode 3 of Screening Bioethics!

Happy 100th Birthday Sister Rosemary

Rosemary Flanigan joined the Sisters of St. Joseph Carondelt in 1947.

She walked to Selma with the Rev. Martin Luther King.

She taught philosophy at Rockhurst University.

She served on the Center's Board of Directors and as Board Chair in 1991.

She was a charter member of the Center's Ethics Committee Consortium.

She joined the Center's staff as a program associate after retiring from teaching at Rockhurst.

She traveled the country helping hospitals develop, educate and evaluate ethics committees.

She was beloved by 250 donors who in 2006 endowed the Rosemary Flanigan Chair in Bioethics. Tarris (Terry) Rosell, DMin, PhD, HEC-C, held the chair until he was succeeded in 2024 by Ryan Pferdehirt, D.Bioethics, HEC-C.



Sister Rosemary celebrated her 100th birthday on August 23! As Terry said, "May others of us be blessed to grow old with a healthy measure of Sr. Rosemary's grace and gratitude." 🙏

**YOU CAN STILL SEND
A BIRTHDAY CARD TO ROSEMARY!**

Sister Rosemary Flanigan
c/o Myra Christopher
PO Box 40
Arrow Rock, MO 65320

Reduce Your 2026 Taxable Income Now by Helping CPB

It's never too soon to think about how charitable giving can save you money on taxes.

If you plan on claiming the standard deduction when you file your 2026 taxes, the 2026 **Universal Charitable Deduction (UCD)** may be for you.

The UCD allows taxpayers who claim the standard deduction to deduct cash donations up to \$1,000 (single filers) or \$2,000 (married couples filing jointly).

UCD cash donations directly reduce your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), regardless of whether you claim the standard deduction or itemize.

Don't forget also you can use a **Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)** to satisfy your **Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)** tax-free starting at age 70½, which is actually younger than the standard RMD starting age of 73.

Imagine you are a single filer in the 25% tax bracket who takes the standard deduction. If you donate a total of \$1,000 to the Center for Practical Bioethics and other qualified public charities, the universal deduction shaves \$1,000 right off your AGI.

Your tax savings are calculated by multiplying your deduction by your tax bracket:

$$\text{Tax Savings} = \$1,000 \times 25\% = \$250$$

Who's Who at CPB

Abby Gast-Watterson

Abby Gast-Watterson is a passionate nonprofit professional and musician from Lee's Summit, Missouri. Abby attended Pepperdine University for a Bachelor of Arts in music, received her master's degree in choral conducting at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and worked with a children's choir in Colorado before returning to the Kansas City area in July 2024. She has worked with people of all ages to accomplish individual and collective goals through music but loves the opportunity to continue finding common ground with folks from all backgrounds through her work with the Center. She loves to bake, embroider, and snuggle with her mechanic husband, Nick, and their two cats, Checkers and Chessica.



What I'm....

Listening to: Two new albums: *Too Much Not Enough* by Daði Freyr and *LUX* by ROSALÍA. Both are by internationally acclaimed artists and offer a range of dance tunes, earworms, and soulful ballads.

Wanting to visit: My husband and I hope to spend a week on the Camino de Santiago in the coming year or two. It's also a dream of ours to travel through Southeast Asia for a few months.

Reading: Though I'm not a parent, I am deeply interested in different parenting styles from around the world and perspectives about parenthood. I am reading through *Hunt, Gather, Parent: What Ancient Cultures Can Teach Us About the Lost Art of Raising Happy, Helpful Little Humans* by Michaela Doucette. I plan to follow this up with *Motherhood* by Sheila Heti.

Watching: "The Great" on Hulu. I hope to finally watch Downton Abbey after this—I'm ready to fully enter my anglophile era.

Getting Exercise: I do CrossFit/bootcamp style classes at Freight House Fitness in the West Bottoms. I throw in a run here or there as well, and I'm trying to regularly incorporate stretching into my daily life.

Worrying about: Midterms!

Wishing for: An America where we can detach from our screens and reattach to our communities.

Looking forward to: Visiting Chicago for a friend's wedding at the end of the month. They are doing a unique and brilliant thing where their reception entertainment will be made up of different bands comprised of their highly musical wedding guests. I'll be a lead singer for my band and rocking some Stevie Nicks!



Save the Dates - *click on the event logo to read more*

Breakfast of Champions

Gathering to raise funds for ethics consultations that support patients, families, and care teams

September 17, 2026

7:30 - 9:00 AM

Sporting KC, 1 Sporting Way, KC, KS



Rosemary Flanigan Lecture

32nd Annual Free Public Reception and Lecture

Healthcare in an Era of Mass Deportation: Values, Ethics, and Narratives

October 29, 2026

6:00 PM Reception, 7:00 PM Lecture

Meadowbrook Park Clubhouse, Prairie Village, KS

Guest Lecturer: Mark G. Kuczewski, PhD, HEC-C, Director, Neiswanger
Institute for Bioethics and Health Policy, Loyola University Chicago

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