

tended each of these meetings. One of the highlights of our last meeting was a Policy Table to which our members brought their institutional ethics policies and discussed some of the virtues and vices of these policies.

Fourth, we have divided the state into four regions, which we have called regional forums, to facilitate the development of more frequent, smaller meetings. These forums provide members with the opportunity to participate in and respond to current bioethics problems within the state and the nation. Our *Newsletter* and our electronic bulletin board print summaries of the forums' discussions. These forums are not mini-conferences. Rather, they are participant driven in that they strive to stimulate discussion among our members.

Our network leadership has many future goals. First, we would like to become effective instruments for educating hospitals, nursing homes, and other healthcare institutions about ethics committees. Second, at the conclusion of our last statewide meeting, we reached a consensus regarding the need for BENO to make recommendations to the state legislature regarding changes in the advance directive law. This law went into effect in October 1991, and complaints throughout the state have been flowing into BENO since its inception. We are still at the discussion stage of this project, but given the energy that already is present in the network, I think that we will soon reach agreement on how to proceed with this task.

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### ✓ West Virginia Network of Ethics Committees

ALVIN H. MOSS

After 4 years of being a consortium of interested healthcare professionals and

administrators, the West Virginia Network of Ethics Committees formalized its status as a dues-paying organization with membership in 1991. The purpose of the West Virginia Network of Ethics Committees is to educate healthcare professionals and the public in West Virginia about ethical issues in healthcare, to serve as a resource for them in analyzing ethical dilemmas in patient care, to assist hospitals, nursing homes, hospices, and home healthcare agencies to start or strengthen ethics committees, and, as a result of all these functions, to improve patient care in West Virginia.

Members of the Network, designated Friends, pay annual membership dues of \$500 and receive the following services:

- 1) two conferences each year on current, relevant topics in health ethics with nationally prominent speakers;
- 2) a 500-page annotated bibliography of up-to-date articles on health ethics that covers 17 topic areas;
- 3) a newsletter published three times each year, which includes articles on health ethics and recent healthcare legislation;
- 4) assistance in starting and/or strengthening their institutional ethics committees;
- 5) a "hotline" accessible for information and advice about health ethics problems;
- 6) a speaker's bureau to assist members in educating their health professionals and community;
- 7) the latest information on the use of advance directives; and
- 8) a Network forum that meets twice each year to discuss difficult cases, analyze recently developed institutional policies on ethically sensitive issues, and present an overview of timely topics in health ethics.

At the present time, 19 hospitals and three nursing homes in West Virginia are Friends of the West Virginia Network of Ethics Committees. For the past 5 years, the Network has held an annual educational symposium, which has been attended by 100–200 people. Topics have included withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining treatment, ethical issues in the healthcare of the elderly, healthcare reform, and how to start or strengthen an ethics committee. Speakers at these symposia have included Joanne Lynn, M.D., Ronald Cranford, M.D., Norman Daniels, Ph.D., John C. Fletcher, Ph.D., Ralph Crawshaw, M.D., and Steven Miles, M.D.

For the first time, the Network is offering a 2½-day Summer Intensive Course in Medical Ethics at a resort and conference center in West Virginia in July 1992. Bruce D. Weinstein, Ph.D., Mark R. Wicclair, Ph.D., and Alvin H. Moss, M.D., of the Center for Health Ethics and Law at West Virginia University will teach the course with Robert M. Arnold, M.D., Director of Clinical Training at the Center for Biomedical Ethics of the University of Pittsburgh. The course is for those who serve or plan to serve on an institutional ethics committee or those who are the institutional resource person for ethical issues. The course is also appropriate for physicians, nurses, social workers, other healthcare personnel, administrators, attorneys, and clergy who want to improve their knowledge of medical ethics. Cases will be used to illustrate concepts, and there will be an emphasis on interaction among the participants. Topics for the course include ethical principles and clinical decision making, determining decision-making capacity, obtaining informed consent and refusal, truth-telling, confidentiality and the duty to warn, withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining treatment,

CPR/DNR and the concept of medical futility, advance directives, realistic expectations for your ethics committees, and effective ethics consultation.

The Network is a service of the West Virginia University Center for Health Ethics and Law. Alvin H. Moss, M.D., is the Director of the Center for Health Ethics and Law, and Bruce D. Weinstein, Ph.D., is an Associate Director of the Center. Dr. Moss is a practicing internist and nephrologist who spends half his time teaching healthcare ethics to physicians, nurses, and dentists and the respective health professional students at the WVU Health Sciences Center and performing research on the appropriate use of life-sustaining treatments. Dr. Weinstein has a full-time appointment in the Center for Health Ethics and Law, and his research focuses on ethical issues in dentistry and pharmacy. He is the editor of an upcoming book on *Dental Ethics* to be published by Lea and Febiger. Mark R. Wicclair, Ph.D., is also an Associate Director of the Center. His book, *Ethics and the Elderly*, will be published in 1992 by Oxford University Press.

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## ✓ Orange County Bioethics Network

SHARON MASS

The Orange County Bioethics Network (OCBEN) has been very active, providing an opportunity to learn and network for Orange County healthcare providers and other interested people. In 1992, there were two half-day presentations: the first on facilitating "Nurse Physician Communication around Bioethics," and the second on "Community Based No CPR." OCBEN continues to act as a resource on bioethics for the community.