



IntegratedEthics In Action

Issue 16

Promising Practices — Emerging Champions

A Reformatted Newsletter: Giving You More

Welcome to the inaugural issue of our redesigned IntegratedEthics *in Action* (IEIA) newsletter. In this fourth year of the IntegratedEthics (IE) program, we are revising our materials to make them more useful and user-friendly.

Our goal for IE *in Action* continues to be to share practical information, making it easier to manage and improve your local IE program. In our redesign we hope to eliminate redundant announcements on the listserv, and keep you up to date on what your IE colleagues are doing across VHA. We want IE *in Action* to help you identify great practices that you can implement locally. New sections will include IE data highlights, reader polls, industry news and announcements, ethics training opportunities across the country, and articles specifically directed at Ethics Consultation, Preventive Ethics, and Ethical Leadership. In this issue we spotlight two promising practices: an Ethics Recognition Program for Employees at Boise VAMC, and Ethics Consultation Rounds that were conducted at Beckley VAMC.

We sincerely appreciate your efforts to continue improving VHA health care, guided by the premise that ethics is essential to quality for Veterans. If you have particular ideas for future pieces in IE *in Action*, or would like to provide us with any feedback, please contact vhaethics@va.gov.

What do you think about the new IntegratedEthics *in Action*?
Please take our poll at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NewIEIA>

Featured in this Issue. . .

Eating Cookies, Talking Ethics: VAMC Beckley (WV) describes how the ethics consultation team took a personal approach to introducing their service to the facility. **Page 1**

Ethics Recognition Program: VAMC Boise launches an innovative way to recognize positive workplace behaviors and practices. **Page 2**

Redesigned Training for Function Coordinators: The National Center for Ethics in Health Care now offers customized training for each role. **Page 2**

Eating Cookies, Talking Ethics: **Beckley's EC Service Tries a Novel Tactic to Spread the Word**

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Last year, the Beckley VAMC's ethics consultation service made rounds at the hospital to pass out cookies and talk about ethics. The idea grew out of a brainstorming session about how to publicize the service's offerings and ensure that all staff members were aware of the availability of a resource to address ethical concerns in health care. IntegratedEthics (IE) leaders were intent on letting facility staff know that ethics did not only exist in the "ivory tower."

"Some of our employees thought that only physicians needed to be concerned with ethics and ethics consultation," Michael Belcher, facility Ethics Consultation Coordinator (ECC), said. "But to improve our service, we knew we had to inform more people about what we do."

Breaking into groups of two to three members and armed with cookies, the ethics consultation (EC) team visited clinical and non-clinical departments throughout the hospital, including business and management areas. "We wanted to let staff know that we

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Boise VAMC Kicks Off Ethics Recognition Program for All Employees

Ben Rogers, VHA/CM, CHC,
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Beginning this month, employees at Boise VAMC who do the right thing will be rewarded by more than their clear conscience or appreciation from immediate colleagues. Inspired by research that employee recognition programs can promote and spread positive workplace behaviors and practices, Ben Rogers, IntegratedEthics (IE) Program Officer for Boise, has initiated an Ethics Recognition Program for all facility employees.

Any employee can nominate a colleague who has displayed outstanding behavior in any of IE's nine domains of ethics in health care, and all nominated employees receive recognition, assuming that the person who nominated them lists an example of how their actions have demonstrated ethical practices in that particular domain. Winners receive a coffee mug that was specially designed for the program and a certificate signed by Mr. Rogers.

"This is not a competition, but rather a way to recognize someone who has demonstrated expertise in the domain, models its desired behaviors, and encourages others to do the same," Mr. Rogers explained. "For example, an employee might be recognized for Professionalism in Patient Care if they showed particular knowledge in that area, and were able to educate colleagues on how to display those same traits. We decided that it would not be a competition because we didn't want to limit the number of people who can be recognized."



Prior to launching the program, the facility's IE program held a coffee mug design competition which encouraged employees to submit their "most creative, cleverest, craftiest drawings, keeping in mind that they must pertain to ethics and fit on a standard coffee mug." Ten entries were submitted, and the winning design was selected by the IE Council.

Mr. Rogers is publicizing the program through all-employee e-mails, and flyers posted throughout the facility. He received one nomination before the program even formally began and positive feedback from facility staff. He anticipates that the program will have a positive impact on the facility environment and culture. Stay tuned!

New IntegratedEthics Function Coordinator Orientation

Becoming a Preventive Ethics Coordinator (PEC), an Ethics Consultation Coordinator (ECC), or an IntegratedEthics Program Officer (IEPO) can seem overwhelming. To facilitate the transition of new IE function coordinators into their IE roles, the National Center for Ethics in Health Care (NCEHC) has recently revised the IE Function Coordinator Orientation Training. This newly revised training is delivered in two parts over two days via LiveMeeting and teleconference calls.

No longer a one-size-fits-all training, the revised program includes three concurrent sessions that specifically provide orientation on the different function roles (PEC, ECC, and IEPO). Under the new program, IE function coordinators select the most appropriate training for their individual role after receiving a one-hour overview of the IE Program. The NCEHC pilot-tested the new training in January, and revisions are currently underway so that we may offer continuing education units to future training participants.

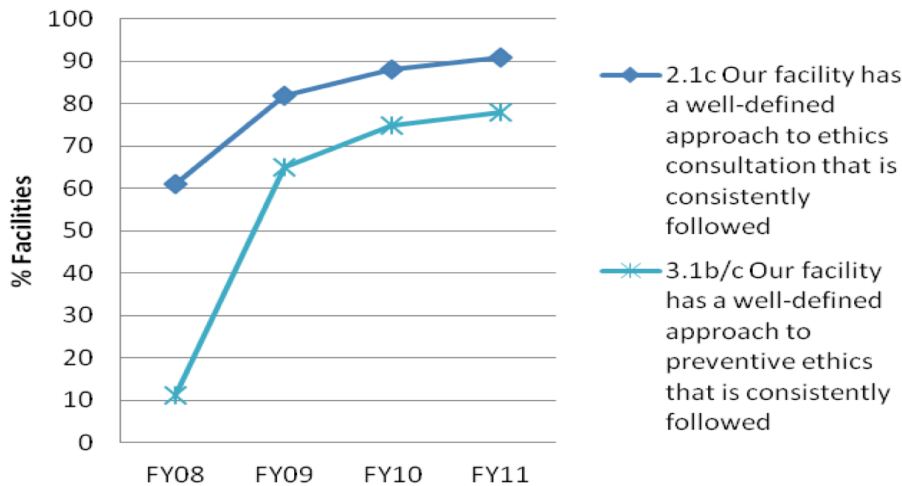
We hope to provide the training each year, in May and September. For more information, contact Beth Ritter, IE Health Education Specialist, at 206-658-4269, or via email at beth.ritter@va.gov.

Reminder . . .

Compliance and Ethics Week is just around the corner (May 6th – 12th). Now would be a great time to partner with your local Compliance and Business Integrity office and begin planning your IntegratedEthics events for that week. Visit the VISN and Facility SharePoint site, <http://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/IntegratedEthics/default.aspx> for ideas, and check out our next issue of *IntegratedEthics in Action*. Our feature article will focus on activities that you can use in your observance of Compliance and Ethics Week.

Data Point: IntegratedEthics Facility Workbook

Consistency of Ethics Consultation and Preventive Ethics approaches based on IntegratedEthics Facility Workbook responses to 2.1c and 3.1b/c



In 2007, IntegratedEthics (IE) set out to use a structured approach to improving VHA ethics programs. With the widespread adoption of various tools such as **CASES** and **ECWeb** in Ethics Consultation, and **ISSUES** in Preventive Ethics, IE is now widely recognized for its efforts in building a systematic and standardized approach to health care ethics in VHA.

IE Facility Workbook data can be accessed at: <http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/workbook.asp>

Beckley Hosts Ethics Consultation Rounds

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had a service, who was on the service, and how they could contact us. We gave examples of reasons why somebody might call on us. And, perhaps most importantly, we explained that the requester did not have to be a physician. It could also be a nurse or staff member, a family member, or a patient," Mr. Belcher explained.

Perhaps owing to the setting, the response they received was enthusiastic. "After you sit around informally with people, eating a chocolate chip cookie and talking about ethics, they will feel more comfortable to come to you with an ethics problem."

To further improve its service, the EC team identified consultants who could also serve on an ad hoc business committee consisting of the Compliance Officer, HR representatives, and others to address business-related ethics issues. Now business-related ethics issues are first discussed there and then filtered, as appropriate, to the EC service. For example, the hiring process is being overhauled in response to concerns that were initially brought to the team.

These efforts have reaped measurable results. According to the facility's ECWeb consultation records, in FY11,

the facility had 16 consults (10 case, 6 non-case), compared with 10 the previous year. Of these 16 consults, three were in the domain of ethical practices in business and management. Further, the requesters are no longer only physicians. "We now get requests from file room clerks, nurses, and family members," Mr. Belcher said.

"Arising from these informal discussions, we can see an expanded awareness of our EC service. From working with people every day, I can tell that they know about ethics, and are very aware of our service," Mr. Belcher said.

The one-time rounds have had such an impact, that the IE Council (IEC) is planning to introduce the full IE program at staff meetings. A rotating team, which includes members of the quadrad, Preventive Ethics, and Ethics Consultation, will describe the functions of the IE program, inform staff how to report an ethics concern, and address general questions about ethics. Teams will visit every service within the facility, the affiliated community-based outpatient clinic, and off-campus administrative offices.

"The meetings will put a face with a name, and help build rapport across

the facility," said Donna Perkins. To support the presentations, she has submitted a proposal to the IEC for dedicated time. "Our Director is very supportive of the IE program — and of dedicated time for the program. Our ECC and Preventive Ethics Coordinator currently have dedicated time, and we have a sense of how much time will be required for these presentations. We hope to make them every year."

Education Offerings:

- **Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics is offering advanced intensive courses in bioethics June 2012. For info e-mail bioethics@jhu.edu, subject: "Summer Intensives" or visit www.bioethicsinstitute.org/intensives**
- **University of Pennsylvania is offering 2 intensive workshops on Clinical Ethics Mediation (May & Aug). For info e-mail Autumn Fiester, PhD, fiester@upenn.edu.**

Note: Financial assistance from the NCEHC is not available for these courses.

IntegratedEthics

Improving Ethics Quality in Health Care

New Preventive Ethics Manuscript

Preventive Ethics: Addressing Ethics Quality Gaps on a Systems Level

Mary Beth Foglia, RN, PhD, MA; Ellen Fox, MD; Barbara Chanko, RN, MBA; Melissa M. Bottrell, PhD, MPH. *Journal of Quality and Patient Safety*. 2012; 38(3); 103-111. *Note some content is only available online, contact your local Librarian for help accessing the manuscript.

Congratulations to all of the Preventive Ethics (PE) contributors and their facilities for the hard work that went into the PE cycles that were included in the manuscript.

New York Harbor Health Care System (New York City): David S. Goldfarb, MD; Sathya Maheswaran, MD; Margaret McGibbon, LCSW; Jeanette Alvarez, LCSW; West Texas VA Health Care System (Big Spring, Texas): Janet Daylong, CPC; Bobby Cordova; Shirleen Brown, RN; Elizabeth Moos, RN; Jamie Park, EdD; Arthur Palomino, LCDC; Tonya Priest Wieck; Illiana Health Care System (Danville, Illinois): Gwenda Broeren, JD, RN, NEA-BC; Kevin Krout; Christina Melikyan, MSW; Ramona Charles, MSN, RN, NEA-BC.

VA IntegratedEthics Highlighted as Model Ethical Leadership Program

The lead article in the Jan/Feb 2012 issue of *Healthcare Executive (Journal of the American College of Healthcare Executives)* lauds VA's Integrated-Ethics (IE) program, stating that VA is "widely recognized as being exemplary in the area of ethical leadership." The article highlights VA's IE model as a resource to help organizations ensure that they are "on the right path to good ethical health." IE, the article explained, is an innovative program from VHA's National Center for Ethics in Health Care. To obtain a copy contact your local Librarian.

New Preventive Ethics Tool

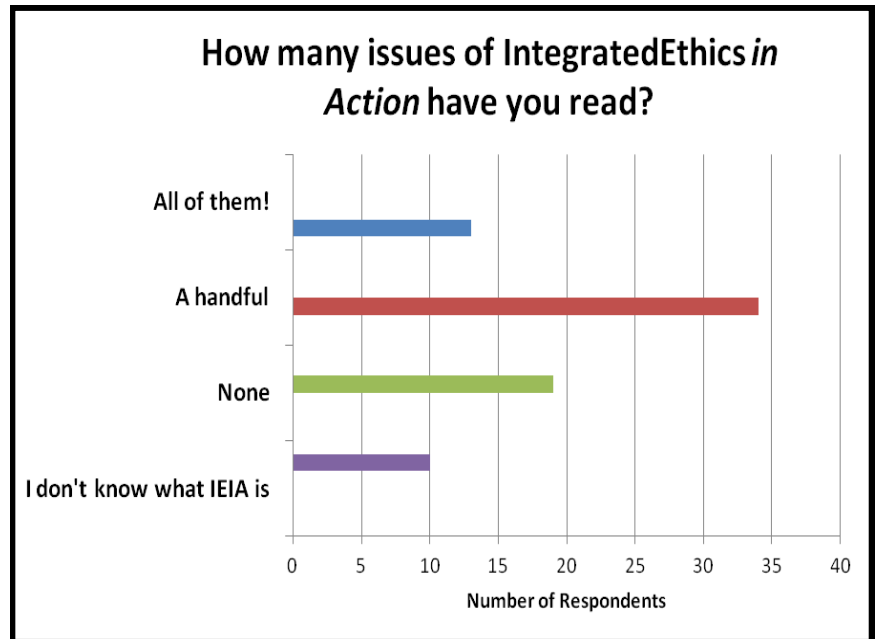
The Preventive Ethics (PE) program released a new tracking tool and worksheet to replace the ISSUES log. This tool was designed to help PE teams assess whether an issue is an ethics issue that can be addressed through a quality improvement approach. The tool also helps teams to prioritize ethics issues and communicate effectively with the IntegratedEthics Council. The tool and worksheet can be found at <http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/PECtools.asp>.

For questions about the tool and worksheet contact Robin Cook (Robin.Cook@va.gov)

How many issues of IntegratedEthics *in Action* have you read?

On the January 23 and January 30, 2012, IntegratedEthics (IE) Improvement Forum calls, we asked participants (via LiveMeeting) if they had read IntegratedEthics *in Action* (IEIA). As a reminder, Improvement Forum teleconferences provide a venue for IE practitioners in facilities and VISNs for solving problems and seeking assistance to maintain and improve their IE programs. Each call features a brief educational presentation and an open, moderated discussion. Calls provide an opportunity to discuss common problems, share strong practices, or seek advice from a content expert. If you would like to participate in future field polls, we invite you to join our regularly scheduled Improvement Forum calls.

For a schedule of upcoming calls, and information on past calls, please visit <http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/TA.asp>.



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