

MEDICAL FUTILITY: CLARITY OR CONFUSION?

Thursday, October 2, 2003

8:00 – 10:00 am

Petteruti Lounge, Room 101

Faunce House

75 Waterman Street

Providence, RI

The term ‘futile’ turns up again and again in clinical decision-making. Usually, the term arises as justification for not offering a particular treatment or for overriding the expressed wishes of a patient or surrogate. There is an assumption that “medical futility” provides objectivity and clarity, when in reality the language of futility is laden with ambiguity and misconception that can potentially complicate the ethical issues in a particular case.

Presented by the Rhode Island Ethics Network, the education symposium, “Medical Futility: Clarity or Confusion?” will aim to satisfy the following objectives:

- Examine the many conflicting definitions of “medical futility”
- Consider the real dilemmas at the heart of disagreements involving futility judgments
- Address the moral positions of the various stakeholders, and the common pitfalls in discussing the relevant issues
- Explore strategies ethics committees can use to facilitate medically and ethically sound solutions.

Please bring cases, comments, opinions, etc.

As always, everyone is welcome and a light breakfast will be served.