



# SaskEthics

*An Ethics Newsletter for Catholic Healthcare Organizations in Saskatchewan*

## Reaching out is harder than it sounds

Dear *SaskEthics* Readers,



**I**t's wonderful to be writing to you again! In March 2020, I went into the hospital to have a baby (Aster Cecilia Heilman, March 25, 2020), and came out to a completely different world. Not only were there diapers to be changed, but there were also masks to be worn, distances to be kept, and a whole year of aching to be closer to loved ones.

When I came back to work last month, I made a concerted effort to connect with as many leaders as I could. I am about a quarter of the way through my list because so many people have generously sat down with me to share what their team members have experienced over the past year. One reflection that has struck me is that although many people working in healthcare have experienced moral distress in the past year, a high number do not feel comfortable seeking support.

I think there are a number of reasons for this hesitancy in seeking support, and from my own experience I can mention a

few of them. After the birth of my daughter, I went through a challenging period of adjustment. At each of my healthcare appointments, I would be asked to fill out a quiz on postpartum depression, and each time I would feel frustrated by the statements I would be asked to rate: "I have felt anxious or worried for no good reason." Is the pandemic a good reason? "I have looked forward with enjoyment to things." Everything is cancelled.

When my anxieties peaked, it was nearly impossible to distinguish postpartum depression from the woes of the pandemic. This left me feeling that reaching out for support would be pointless. What could a therapist tell me that I didn't already know? New moms should get out of the house, but I can't.

Fortunately for me, life got a lot better when we discovered that our daughter had a number of allergies that were contributing to our problems. However, that feeling of futility that I felt in her first four months of life came back to me as I heard that our staff members were struggling with accessing supports. How can we support each other when we know



St. Paul's Hospital



Catholic Health  
Association of Saskatchewan

what the source of our distress is and it can't be fixed?

I don't have a complete answer to this question, but as I have continued to watch our teams I think at least part of the answer lies in finding creative ways to support each other and to make using a service like EFAP a normal occurrence. My hope is that the more we can be open about our challenges, the more we can support each other. What is your team

doing to encourage mental health? How can you help a teammate through a difficult period of time? Let me know your answers at the e-mail below as I am eager to hear more about how our teams have cared for each other over the past year.

Dr. Mary Heilman,  
CHAS Bioethicist  
(306)-655-5197  
mary@chassk.ca

## ETHICS ROUNDS

**May 19, 2021**  
**11:00 am - 12:00 pm**

SPEAKER	TOPIC	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Dr. Mary Heilman, Ethicist, Emmanuel Health	Vaccination Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand the Catholic Principle of Cooperation.</li><li>• Apply the Principle of Cooperation to the question of whether or not to receive a COVID-19 Vaccine.</li><li>• Discuss how people of good will can arrive at different conclusions about vaccine use.</li></ul>

**WebEx Presentation:**  
[CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#)  
Meeting number (access code): 132 553 2275  
Meeting password: rmTP4DnUR53

If you have any questions regarding this Ethics Presentation,  
please contact [ethics@saskhealthauthority.ca](mailto:ethics@saskhealthauthority.ca)

Saskatchewan Health Authority  
 [saskhealthauthority.ca](http://saskhealthauthority.ca)