

Introduction

THE NUMEROUS AND COMPLEX issues that healthcare executives encounter every day are an intrinsic part of organizational life. Many of these issues have significant ethical dimensions. The three separate volumes that constitute the third edition of *Managing Healthcare Ethically* build on the two previous editions. The present book, *Leadership Roles and Responsibilities*, is the first of these three volumes. The second volume focuses on organizational ethics, management, and policies, while the third volume addresses ethical challenges related to clinical care.

Each of the three volumes gathers selected columns originally written for American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) publications between 2010 and 2020, along with a few earlier columns that remain as appropriate today as when they were originally published. The columns were selected because of their relevance to today's healthcare environment and challenges, as well as their practical application for healthcare leaders committed to maintaining an ethically grounded organization.

In each of the three volumes that make up the third edition, we pose some provocative questions and offer other material useful for teaching purposes. Following each column, we provide two discussion questions related to the column that can be used to foster a discussion with colleagues or healthcare management students. Each

volume also contains an extensive bibliography of books and articles for readers who wish to pursue particular subtopics.

Because healthcare executives play such a key role in leading ethical organizations, this first volume focuses on this crucial topic. It contains columns that highlight the myriad issues healthcare leaders encounter in ensuring ethical performance in both their institutions and the communities they serve. In this volume, we have collected columns that provide specific guidelines to expand skill sets, emphasize the relevance of personal attributes and character, and underscore the importance of maintaining an ethical culture. The content in this volume addresses the need for strong moral leadership and professionalism in guiding an organization to be ethically aligned with the organization's mission and values.

We know high-reliability healthcare organizations are managed by executives who adopt best practices that ensure the provision of value-based and high-quality patient care, have clear performance indicators, and exemplify the professional values they expect of others. As a number of the authors in this volume emphasize, senior executives are expected to establish and maintain an organizational culture that consistently promotes patient-centered care and persistently mitigates potential staff burnout.

The likelihood of conflict, daunting dilemmas, and inevitable management mistakes requires executives to be candid in their communications with governing bodies, physicians, employees, and the community. Executives must be personally resilient to cope successfully with the challenges associated with making judicious compromises, preventing staff abuse, and meeting the needs of the underserved.

A strong ethical foundation is indispensable if executives are to make sound judgments under stressful circumstances. Taking timely action when a subordinate or physician underperforms, confronting a clinician staffing shortage, and reducing a workforce when required are just a few examples of such situations.

Two vital steps increase the probability of success. One is asking the right questions when making a hiring decision, to ensure

a candidate's values are aligned with those of the organization and the management team. The other is taking your ethical pulse periodically by completing ACHE's Ethics Self-Assessment (www.ache.org/about-ache/our-story/our-commitments/ethics/ethics-self-assessment). The first section of this self-assessment addresses a variety of major areas related to leadership. The second section covers relationships with significant constituencies, including the community; patients and their families; the board; colleagues and staff; clinicians; and buyers, payers, and suppliers. Some executives have benefited by having their staff complete the assessment on them as part of a 360-degree performance review.

Our goal in producing the third edition of *Managing Healthcare Ethically* is to continue raising an appreciation for how and why ethical reasoning and professionalism affect your organization's performance and success, as well as your own. We hope healthcare executives and health administration educators will use the book to reinforce the concept that ethical leadership, sensitivity, and engagement are not the sole purview of an organization's ethics committee. Instead, ethical reflection should be an inherent element in daily decision-making processes and relationships.

Instructor Resources

This book's instructor resources include PowerPoint slides, case studies, and lists of selected ethics center websites and selected ethics journals.

For the most up-to-date information about this book and its instructor resources, go to ache.org/HAP and browse for the book's title, author name, or order code (24371).

This book's instructor resources are available to instructors who adopt this book for use in their course. For access information, please e-mail hapbooks@ache.org.