



Covenant Health Ethics Centre
Summary of Activities
2023-24

We acknowledge that lands upon which Covenant Health facilities are situated is the traditional ancestral territory of a diversity of Indigenous peoples and home to Treaty 4, 6, 7, and 8.

We honor the Blackfoot Confederacy – Kainai, Piikani, and Siksika, the Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Nakota Sioux, Stoney Nakoda, the Tsuu T'ina Nation and the Métis People of Alberta.

This includes the six Métis Settlements and the twenty-two Districts of the Otipemisiwak government within the Métis Nation of Alberta, that reside within the historical Northwest Métis Homeland.

We recognize and give thanks to the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit who have lived in and cared for these lands for generations, all who continue to grace these lands, and all future generations.

We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers, Matriarchs and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us.

We make this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on or are visiting.



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Summary of Activities
2023-24

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From the Chief Mission and Ethics Officer

It is with gratitude and pride that I present the Annual Report for 2023/2024. I hope you will take time to read it and see all that was accomplished and gain insight into the diverse ways the Ethics and Discernment Center strengthens Covenant by supporting all of us to live our Mission especially in changing and challenging times.

Covenant's Ethics and Discernment Center provides excellent service as outlined in this annual report. The staff of the EDC assist the clinical and support services areas by providing ethics consultations, moral stress debriefings, education, and policy development support. Their commitment to furthering Ethical decision making though out the organization is especially important as Covenant continues its mission to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged during times of change and increasing need. They are attentive to the changing trends in health care delivery and seek to be well integrated as they anticipate emerging issues that will raise ethical questions for care teams and organizational leadership.

The Ethics and Discernment Center received strong endorsement of their influence during the Accreditation Canada survey as surveyors saw the evidence of a vibrant ethics culture at Covenant while providing encouragement to make this relevant and accessible to every member of the healthcare team. During this past year the Ethics and Discernment Center has developed a refreshed workplan that focused

on the key areas, engage, equip, and empower. The staff have been traveling to rural and urban sites to make connections and provide services. They are involved in many committees to bring a perspective that is inclusive of our diverse population and ethically sound. Ethics is well integrated into the Diversity and Inclusion Council and supports the Indigenous, Black and LGBTQ2S Advisory Committees as engaged groups who are moving Reconciliation, Diversity and Inclusion forward at Covenant.

This year has included many significant shifts, including anticipated changes to Alberta's health care system. With this change comes uncertainty, but also great opportunity for Covenant to continue to live its mission while partnering to address areas of needed improvement in the health system. The complexity of these changes affirm the EDC's important role to champion Covenant's ethical culture and principled approach to living our mission to make a difference in the lives of those who need us most.

Bonnie Tejada
Chief Mission and Ethics Officer



In Focus: Strategic Planning

In keeping with Covenant's Preventative Ethics approach, the Ethics & Discernment Centre has taken several intentional steps to invest in ethics capacity development for the future. Looking ahead brings the work of identifying what is required—from an ethics perspective—to support those we currently serve and those who we will serve in the years to come. This work is purposeful, and it reflects the Centre's commitment to values such as integrity and respect, partnering with others, and integrating ethics into all that we do.

Our three-fold approach: Equip, Engage and Empower focuses on generating awareness of the values that are lived out in our everyday interactions and fostering connections. Engaging directly with those we aim to support through many means leads to the diverse relationships that are essential for navigating our ethically complex and dynamic environments. Through digital communication tools, involvement in corporate orientation, and personal encounters with staff and physicians during ethics rounding, the EDC nurtures connections that inspire future ethics learning and service within the organization.

Equipping our teams to make sense of and confidently respond to the ethical challenges of their work and relationships is a second area of focus within the EDC's strategic approach. The goal of our commitments in this focus is to support the development of morally courageous and ethically competent staff,

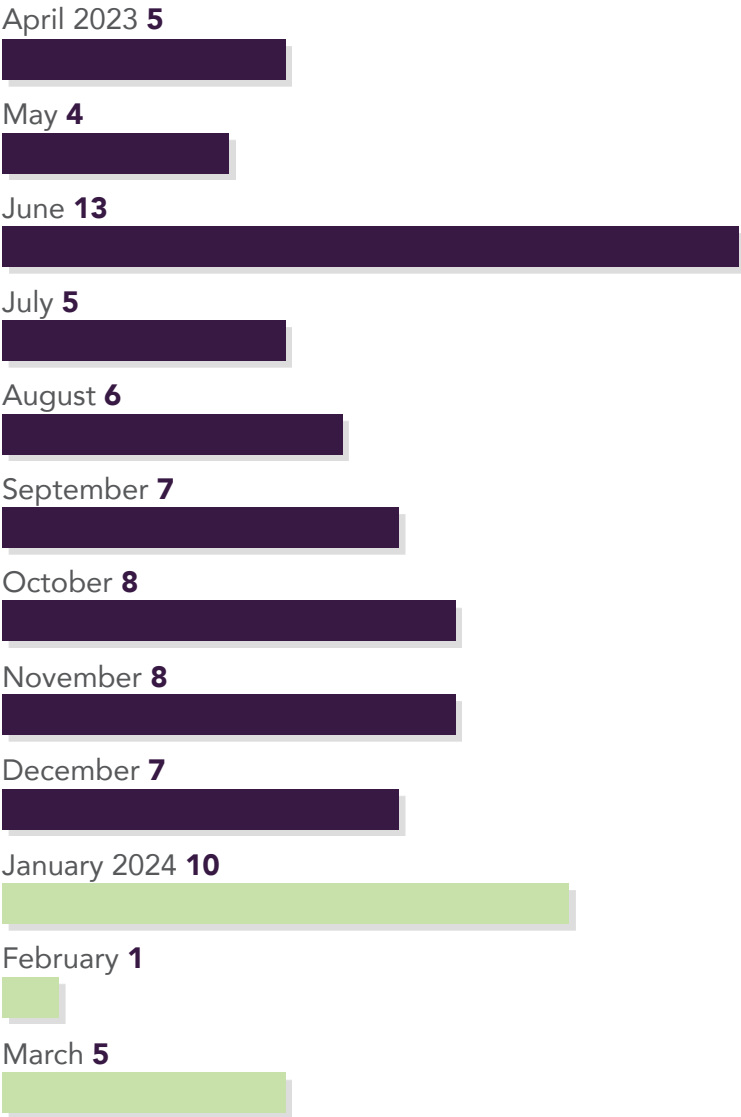
physicians, and volunteers who foster mission-inspired communities of care. 'Equipping' is often seen as the heart of the Centre's work, and is regularly expressed through timely and scheduled education, clinical ethics consultation, and policy interpretation.

As we look ahead and glimpse the horizon, we also anticipate opportunities to support Covenant's culture of discernment in new and imaginative ways. The integration of new health technologies and capabilities, evolving societal norms and expectations, as well as questions inherent in the current health system restructuring, call us to consider anew how we will express our values and commitments as an organization. Over the next three years the EDC will integrate with work being undertaken by partners within organization to foster empowering environments. Work that cultivates ethical leadership, mission-inspired culture, and ethics tools to support both.

Ethics Consultation Stats

The core business of the Ethics & Discernment Centre continues to be our 24-hour, province-wide ethics consultation service. Clinical ethics consultations contain structured discussions led by a member of the ethics team. Consultations are guided by Covenant Health’s ethical decision-making framework, and the Catholic Health Ethics Guide (Catholic Health Association of Canada 2014). The data below reflects consultation services undertaken by the Ethics & Discernment Centre from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

Consultation requests by month



Consultation request by urgency



- Immediate (<2 hours) **15**
- Moderate (3-5 days) **27**
- Not urgent (>5 days) **19**
- Urgent (<24 hours) **18**

Consultation request by population



- Adult (18-65) **28**
- Seniors (65+) **31**
- Unknown **20**

79

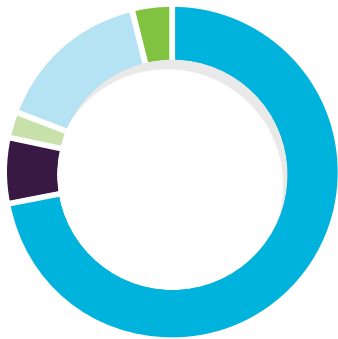
consultation requests were made in the last year.

Consultation request by requestor's job role of position



- Allied Health/Support Service **9**
- Corporate Service **2**
- Executive/Senior Leader **3**
- Manager **18**
- Non-Clinical Staff **3**
- Nursing (staff, NP, Unit Sup) **14**
- Other **6**
- Physician/Medical Student **24**

Consultation request by care category



- Acute **57**
- Corporate **5**
- Homecare/community living **2**
- Long-term/continuing **12**
- Supportive living **3**

Consultation request by organization

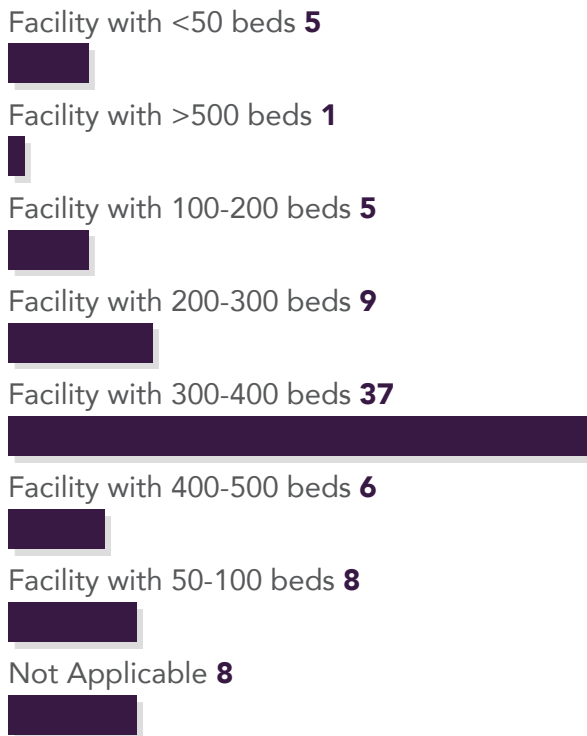


- Covenant Care **2**
- Covenant Health **74**
- External - health care **2**
- External - non-health care **1**

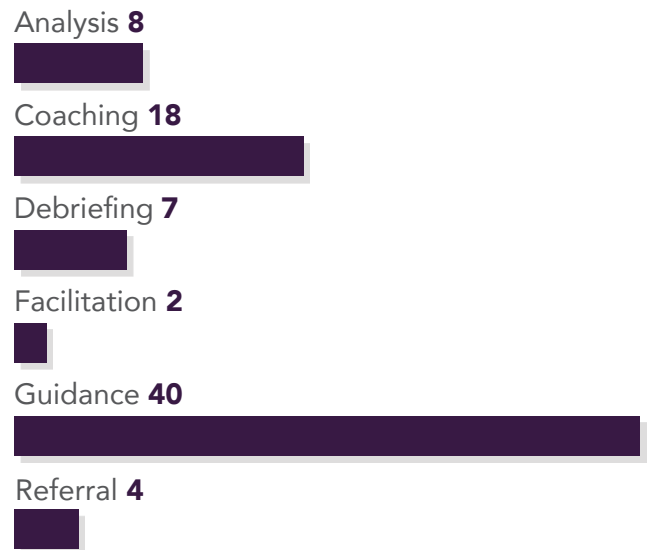
Consultation request by category



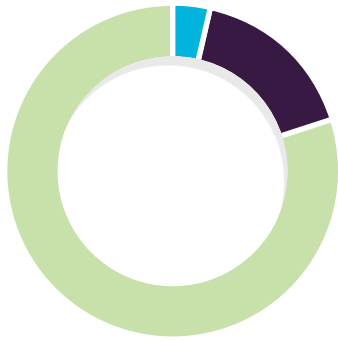
Consultation request by site/facility demographics



Consultation request by type of support provided



Consultation request by care setting



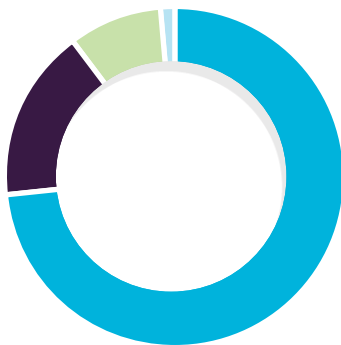
- Corporate issue **5**
- Rural facility **14**
- Urban facility **59**

Consultation request by population



- Adult (18-65) **28**
- Seniors (65+) **31**
- Unknown **20**

Consultation request by consult category



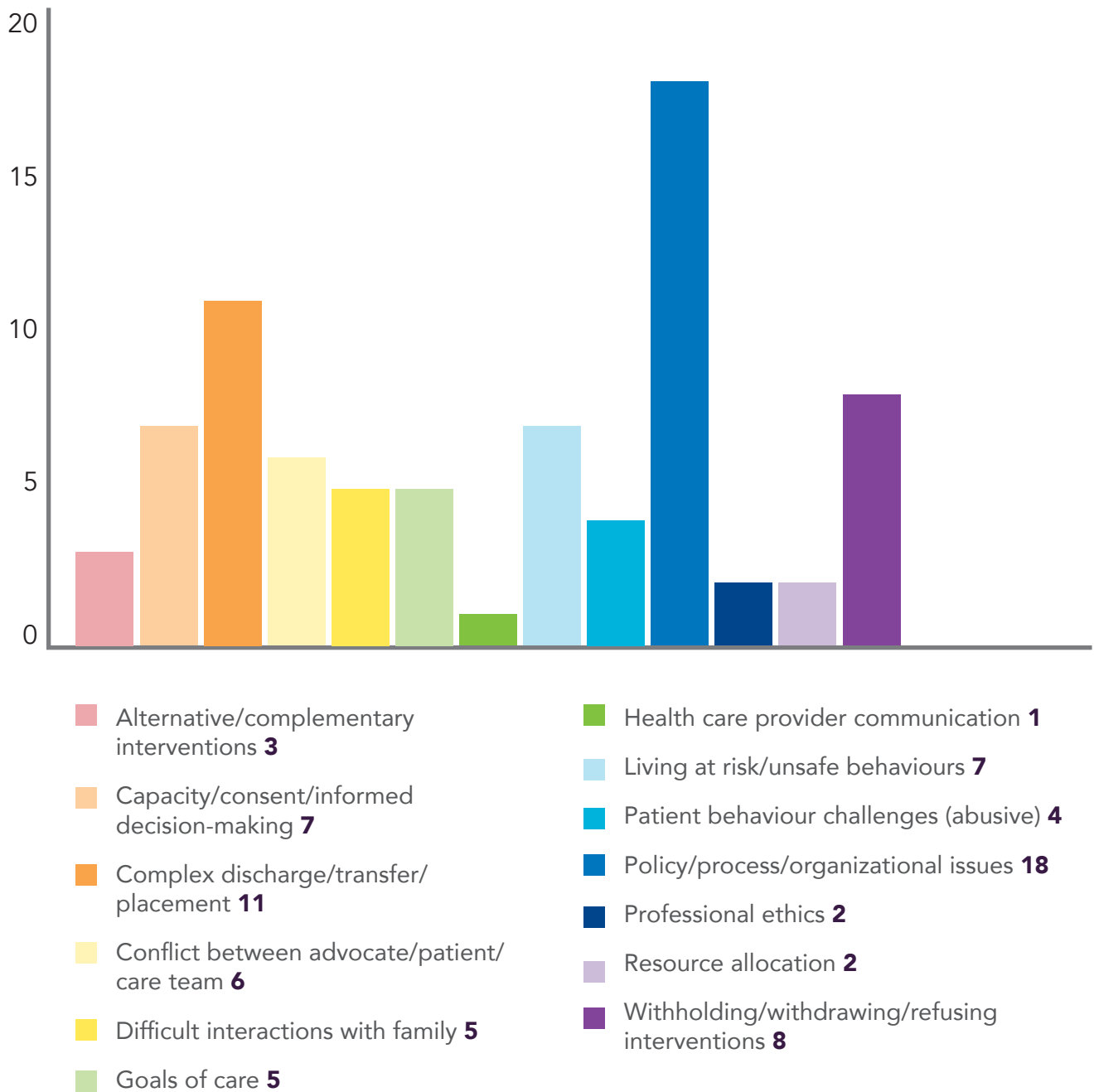
- Clinical **58**
- Professional **7**
- Organizational **3**
- Research **1**

Consultation request by method of request



- Email **35**
- Phone **22**
- Online form **17**
- In-person **2**
- On-call **3**

Consultations by primary theme



Consultations by secondary theme



Alternative/complementary interventions **3**

Capacity/consent/informed decision-making **14**

Complex discharge/transfer/placement **2**

Conflict between advocate/patient/care team **7**

Difficult interactions with family **4**

Early induction **1**

Goals of care **4**

Health care provider communication **2**

Living at risk/unsafe behaviours **5**

Maid medical assistance in dying **1**

Patient behaviour challenges (abusive) **1**

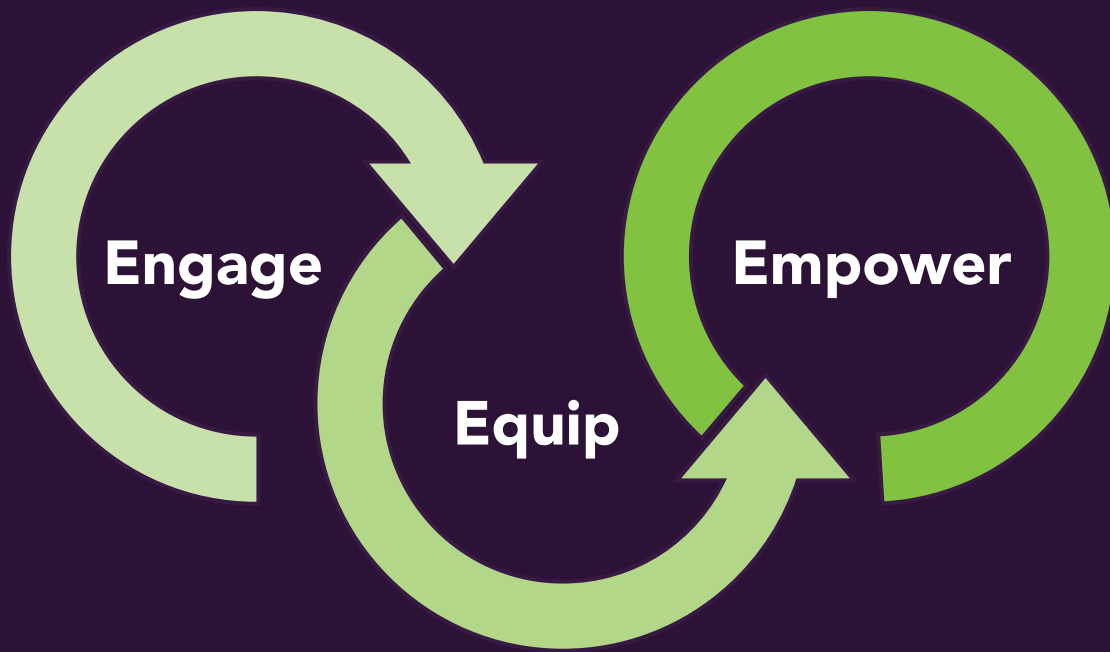
Policy/process/organizational issues **6**

Privacy & confidentiality **1**

Professional ethics **11**

Resource allocation **14**

Withholding/withdrawing/refusing interventions **3**



Highlights

The Covenant Health Ethics and Discernment Centre supports healthcare professionals and those we serve in making thoughtful, ethical decisions. Our highlights for this fiscal year are showcased in three main areas based on the activities and services rendered this period. The three areas include: engage, equip, and empower.

Engage

Corporate orientation

The EDC is an integral part of Corporate Orientation where new employees are introduced to the Covenant Health community and resources. During Corporate Orientation, ethics is featured in two ways. Updates from the Chief, Mission and Ethics are shared at the beginning of day and breakout session conversations featuring ethics and other Covenant departments.

Our ethicists and Corporate Lead present on behalf of Mission, Ethics, and Spirituality to share with new employees, the Mission history, strategic areas of focus, and Mission and Ethics resources available to them. New employees are invited to reflect on how they might contribute to the mission and culture we aspire for, which values each person's unique contribution. The presentation also highlights Mission Awards recipients who exemplify our Covenant values as well as the recognition Covenant Health has received from external organizations.

During the breakout sessions, our coordinator, Ogechukwu Ezeh, leads conversations with new staff in which she highlights resource people, ethics education opportunities, committee work, consultation services, mission discernment, and policy input. These conversations serve to reinforce how Covenant values lead decisions made in all aspects of the health services we provide and how, as an organization, each one of us has a role to play in ensuring an ethical environment for all.

Newsletter

The monthly ethics newsletter serves as a tool for engagement and information sharing. The newsletter readership has continued to see an increase in subscription. This fiscal year, 34,000 deliveries of the newsletter were made to the 214 newsletter subscribers with 29,070 reads. The newsletter showcases news stories across the world that are ethics related. It's also an avenue for informing subscribers about ethics events both internal and external to the organization. Work is underway to revamp this tool.

Engaging other Covenant departments:

Ethics & Discernment Centre staff engage with other Covenant departments by bringing an ethical perspective as well as diversity and inclusion perspective to the work of other committees and councils including:

- Palliative End of life Quality Council
- Patient Safety Advisory Council
- Monthly Learning and Governance Committee
- Site management meetings
- Stewardship Accountabilities Committee
- Diversity and Inclusion Council
- Black, Indigenous, & LGBTQ2S+ Advisory Bodies
- Alberta Palliative Care Competencies and Education
- Psychological Health & Wellness Advisory Committee
- Patient Relations Advisory Committee
- Enterprise Risk Management Committee
- Mission Inspired Culture Collaborative
- Exceptional Situations Protocol Committee

Ethics Committees

Our Ethics Committees are essential to our ability to respond to ethical issues arising across Covenant Health and to promoting the ethical climate within our organization. We rely on diverse membership offering their knowledge, expertise, and experience to increase our capacity to respond to ethical challenges with wisdom. Together our Ethics Committees form the core of our moral community.

Each Ethics Committee endorse a Terms of Reference document and annual Functional Plan to guide their activities. Each committee member devotes time to monthly meetings as well as contributing to ethics consults and participating in ethics education events. When special topics deserving of attention arise, e.g., trauma-informed ethics consultation, a smaller group of members dedicate time to explore and share focused information for the benefit of all committee members. As the Ethics and Discernment Centre moves forward with Strategic Planning, members were invited to provide feedback that will be used for refinement.

Edmonton and Area Ethics Committee

This committee is our largest with approximately 24 members representing the acute, long-term care, and continuing care sites in the Edmonton area. Members include clinician leaders and managers from Nursing, Dietary, Social Work, Mental Health, Palliative Care, Spiritual Care, Legal, Patient and Resident Experience, Integrated Access, Professional Practice, and Transition Services. Our Edmonton and Area Ethics Committee has a functional outlining initiatives for building their internal ethics capacity as well as outward focused activities to heighten ethical reflection with colleagues across Covenant. For example, in addition to consult reviews, the committee explored topics such as health care governance, complex discharge, alternate decision makers, goals of care designation, MAiD changes, and trauma-informed ethics consultation. This year we have had the pleasure of introducing new members who have contributed significantly to our ability to reflect on the current state of the health care system.

Banff Mineral Springs Hospital Ethics Committee

This committee benefits from the strong commitment of Site Administration, leadership from Spiritual Care, and involvement of staff and Board members alike. In addition to consult reviews, the committee facilitated extended discussions on the EDC educational sessions. For example, following the Quarterly Seminar on Stigma, members engaged in how stigma appears in their work and, as a result, decided to open the discussion to community members with a presentation on stigma at the upcoming Mental Health Awareness Week event in May 2024.

Rural Ethics Committee

The Rural Ethics Committee has remained active over the past year. We have provided support to staff through education, consultation reviews, and discussing ethical issues that are consistent across the rural sites. Membership has changed through the year with the changes of Site Administrators and chaplains. We know the sites have been very busy with the implementation of Connect Care and other ongoing challenges like staffing and the complex care required by patients and residents. The Ethics and Discernment Center is grateful for their commitment to attend the meetings and be part of the sharing and learning. We look forward to visiting more of the Rural Sites over the next year and connecting with the staff to find other opportunities to further equip, engage and empower them in ethical decision making.

Ethics Book Club/ Catholic Health Association USA (CHAUSA) Book club

Reading offers a window into lives other than our own. In health care, we encounter people from all walks of life. Even in those brief moments, we can use our moral imagination to reach out to those we serve if we have been attentive to other distant narratives. In this way, books serve to expand possibilities for understanding and compassion.

This year, we gathered to share five fiction and non fiction books. Participants offered insights from their own lives that expanded our understanding of the authors' perspective. The Book Club discussion space is a safe one that opens challenges, disagreements, heartfelt sharing, and, sometimes, hearty laughter as we encounter the absurdity of life's circumstances.

The Book Club invitation is widely circulated through the EDC site and on Compass Weekly. Regular participants include staff from our ethics committees, Spiritual Care, Nursing, and Administration. Book Club is offered every other month for one hour over the lunch break.

In addition to our EDC Book Club, our ethicists deepened their ethics skills by participating in the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHAUSA) Ethics Book Club. Some of the books discussed included: CRISPR People: The Science and Ethics of Editing Humans by Henry T. Greely, Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men by Caroline Criado Perez and Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology by Deirdre Cooper Owens.

Ethics Rounding

One of the outcomes of the COVID pandemic is staff turnover. New staff and reassigned staff may be unfamiliar with the support and resources available to them as they face ethical challenges in an ever-changing health care landscape. For this reason, the EDC initiated targeted rounding to visit nursing units and programs across Covenant Health (COV) sites. Our ethicists visited the Misericordia and Grey Nuns Community Hospitals, St. Joseph's Auxiliary Hospital, and St. Joseph's Hospital in Vegreville. On these visits, our ethicists presented information about ethics, common themes encountered in ethics consults, ethics education opportunities, and ethics resources. Each COV site and program are encouraged to have representation on our ethics committees, local ethics committee representatives are introduced as point persons to link to EDC support and resources back to the site and programs. Plans to visit all Covenant Health sites continue with anticipated visits to rural sites in the upcoming months.

Equip

POET Learning Session

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the formation of a Provincial On-call Ethics Team (POET) made up of staff from the urban and rural sites has helped build capacity in ethical reflection to our ethics consultation process. The POET team is supported through a monthly education session, "POET Learning Session" to equip members as they undertake the consultation process. Members engage in the POET learning session that focus on the core competencies learning guide, descriptions of relevant concepts, integration of learnings and they are invited to contribute their own knowledge and experience to the consultation process. Some of learning sessions covered topics such as: Pragmatism: habits & deliberations, Empathy, Risks, The Rural Context: Focus on Bonnyville, etc.

Quarterly Ethics Seminar

Our Quarterly Seminars continues to offer an opportunity to deepen reflection and discussion on ideas that influence health and human services. This year our seminars focused on related ideas of stigma and vulnerability. Our format of feature speakers followed by small group discussion continues to create time and space for thoughtful engagement on the topics. We are joined by participants from within Covenant as well as across Alberta and around Canada.

Transforming Ethics Workshop series

As Covid restrictions began to ease, our team took up a vision for hosting, as in years past, a one-day ethics conference focused on health provider well-being. Tapping into our Covid-honed 'flexibility', we transitioned our proposed in-person gathering to a series monthly virtual workshops delivered by our conference presenters. The change paid off as we were able to reach a wider geographic audience and participation.

At the time of writing, four of six workshops are complete and have included the following topics: "We are the ecology: renewing the conditions for care within ourselves, our teams and our organizations", "Understanding the Complexities of the Indigenous Health Crisis", "Inspiring Change through Compassionate Inquiry: Trauma and Resiliency Informed Practices in Action" and "Exploring personal responses to providing trauma-informed care". The education offered has reached an audience of 164 participants located across Canada from B.C to Nova Scotia. Plans were changed and the Transforming Ethics Workshop Series was created. We are providing one workshop a month during the lunch hour from January to June of 2024.

At the present time we have completed 4 of the 6 workshops. They have been well attending with people for different sites, organizations, occupations, and provinces. Please check out the upcoming and previous workshops on the website.

Accreditation feedback

The Ethics and Discernment participated in Covenant's 2023 Accreditation Canada activities. Covenant was rated as having met 96.3% of the criteria examined in the accreditation process. The report highlighted that Covenant's approach to ethical and principle-based decision-making is a strength of the organization. The report also noted Covenant Health demonstrates its' commitment to Ethical Integrity through the work of the EDC. During the on-site visit, there was a desire amongst staff to talk about the organization's values and how they are used in "everyday life" and guide decision-making. The report highlighted that Covenant Health has been deliberate in ensuring that structures and processes are in place to support principle-based decision-making in all aspects of the organization's care and services, and in alignment with the Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Plan. This work is done through education, resources, mentorship, and the work of the Mission, Ethics and Spirituality portfolio. There is ongoing education from the bedside to the boardroom to ensure a sound understanding of the Ethics consultative service. The value of these resources has been underscored during the past 18 months as evidenced by the increased engagement of the ethics team members on addressing issues such as moral distress amongst healthcare providers.

Empower

Provincial On-call Ethics Team (POET):

The Provincial On-Call ethics team has 2 new members this year, Kim Strach, and Meaghan Richardson. Two members have stepped away from the team due to other commitments. Our team completed a narrative evaluation of the On-call Ethics Team in 2022. Based on the feedback from the evaluation we created a work plan and have been addressing the areas for improvement. The focus of the work is on increasing the competencies of the team members, offering learning sessions and opportunities to practice the skills for facilitating the process of an ethics consultation. Team members have also been sharing their areas of knowledge and skill creating a pool of expertise to offer support during consultations. We are grateful for the diversity of team members from many different departments both rural and urban and for their willingness to support the POET initiative.

Mission Discernment Tool (International nursing recruitment, co-gendering rooms)

Our healthcare system is currently seeing some challenges that have been experienced in past years. 2 areas that can have negative effects on the system and seem to cycle through the life of any healthcare system are staffing and bed capacity shortages. Alberta continues to see an increase in population at a significant rate, 4.3% which equals 194,000 people, the highest since 1980. Also, many Stat Canada reported 20,000 staff left the Healthcare field after the Covid Pandemic in 2023.

International Nurse Recruitment is one of the initiatives Covenant engaged in to address the staffing gap and Co-Gender Room Assignment is one of the ways bed capacity is addressed when the need requires.

In the past prior to both initiatives being implemented a Mission Discernment was completed for each one. The Mission Discernment highlighted the ethical dilemmas the initiatives can create and how from certain perspectives they may seem as oppositional to the values of our organization. The Mission Discernment also explained how in certain situations we must make tough choices, the values we use to make the choices, and the values we use to ensure we are following ethical practice. As a result of the situation, we find ourselves currently in, the Discernment documents were revisited. To ensure the Mission Discernments are relevant to the times we find ourselves in now, the Mission Discernments were reviewed, and current summary documents were created. These documents are for use with staff to reacquaint themselves with the process of Mission Discernment and to support their understanding of how the Mission Discernment ensures the actions of Covenant represent who we say we are as an organization.

Visit the Covenant Health website to view the following Mission Discernment tools:



[Co- Gendered
Room Assignment](#)



[Ethical Considerations
for Recruitment of
international Nurses](#)

Report from the Indigenous Health Equity and Reconciliation Consultant

As the Indigenous Health Equity and Reconciliation Consultant, I have been speaking with employees across the Covenant Family over the past few months about Truth and Reconciliation. I have talked with the Senior Leadership Team, managers, and front-line staff about the work they and their teams have done to implement the Truth and Commission Calls to Action, barriers they have faced, facilitators, and resources needed to continue progressing forward in Indigenous health equity. I spoke with groups across Covenant Health, Covenant Care, Covenant Living, and the Covenant Foundation.

These initial conversations have not only prompted reflection but also provided a platform for employees and teams to discuss steps to move this work forward within the organization. The expressed interest in advancing Indigenous health equity can be moved into an action phase. I am hopeful that these discussions have not only sparked further interest in the work but also inspired some action, even if it is individual reflection. Each of us has the power to contribute to this journey of Indigenous health equity.

I have submitted my final report, which includes the current state and recommendations specific to the Covenant Family to meet the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action within the Covenant Family.

Students

The EDC continues to welcome students as an opportunity to influence the next generation of health care professionals. Each November, our ethicists meet with palliative medicine residents to educate and discuss ethical issues in their discipline. From January through April, we hosted an after-degree nursing student for a practicum on leadership in health care. Students are invited to attend our committee meetings to expose them to the ethical dimension of their clinical practice.

Team Member Highlights

Our team members share the highlights of this fiscal year in their words and experiences below.

Jon Gilchrist

A highlight was seeing the team apply creativity to the challenge of expanding our presence during this season of pandemic recovery and health system transition. Exploring ways to support patients, residents, and staff brought the gift of new opportunities and the excitement of forming new relationships.

Dr. Eleanor Stewart

The highlight of my year was sharing my ethics knowledge with clinicians across Covenant to arrive at innovative value-based solutions to the struggles faced in an ever-changing health care environment.

Cecilia Marion

The first year of being part of the Ethics Center team has been very exciting. The opportunity to work with and learn from the Oge, Eleanor and Jon has been an incredible gift. Under Jon's guidance we further developed our Strategic Plan and Work Plan.

Ogechukwu Ezeh

This fiscal year, I have enjoyed creating new connections and discussing ethics through corporate orientation. The engagements also through the monthly transforming ethics workshop sessions and the quarterly seminars have given me a renewed vision and more zeal to continue my quest for knowledge.

Deborah Aikins

I had the pleasure of working with Jon, Eleanor, Cecilia, and Ogechukwu from the Ethics and Discernment Centre for my undergraduate nursing leadership placement. Some of my highlights included participating in EDI and Indigenous health meetings. I learned about the complexity of barriers Indigenous patients face when entering the healthcare system including discrimination, broken trust, and failure of the healthcare team to incorporate traditional medicine practices. I also had the opportunity to sit in ethics consultations between physicians, nurse managers and ethicists. During these consultations, I was able to learn many ethical perspectives which strengthened my classroom knowledge and facilitated an understanding of how ethical frameworks are examined to produce a recommendation. I have seen my mentor Jon Gilchrist (Director of Ethics and Diversity) demonstrate transformational leadership by empowering the ethicists on the team. He has also inspired me to think about nursing practice in new ways. For example, we discussed how in medicine 'best practice' is taught as procedures used to reach the best results, but 'wise practice' allows leadership to expand their understanding of healthcare such as with Indigenous ways of knowing. During these meetings, the Ethics and Discernment Centre team created brave spaces for me to ask questions and reflect on my own judgements. With the support of the ethics team, I was able to realize my ideas and perspectives have value, especially having front-line experience with patients. I will carry this newfound confidence and ethical reflection into my future practice.



MAiD

Covenant Health continues to respond to people in our care who request medically assisted death. This compassionate response in its entirety, will involve exploring the nature of the person's request while appropriately addressing their pain and symptom management needs. Covenant's response also includes ensuring psychosocial and spiritual supports, and if the individual decides to proceed with MAiD, attentiveness in the transfer of care to a MAiD provider facility or their preferred home environment.

On February 29, 2024, legislation to extend the temporary exclusion of eligibility to receive MAiD in circumstances where a person's sole underlying medical condition is a mental illness received Royal assent and came into effect immediately. This legislation is detailed in Bill C-62, and it temporarily postpones the MAiD eligibility date for persons suffering solely from a mental illness until March 17, 2027.

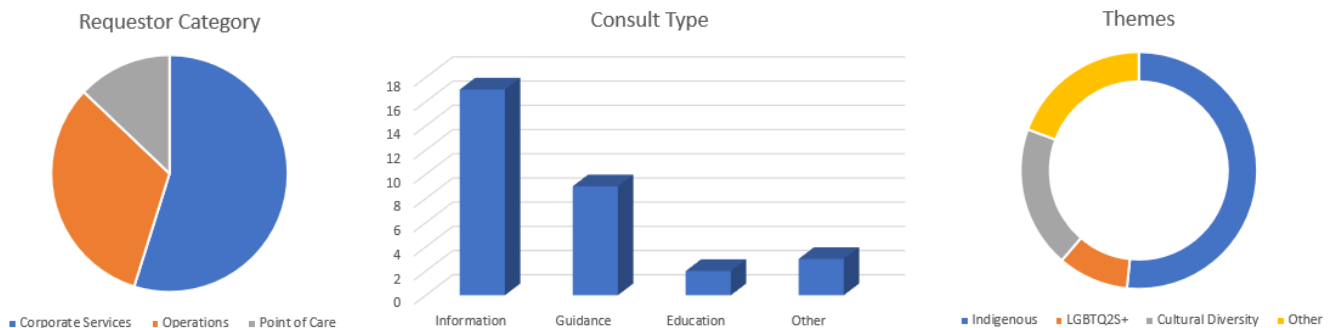
This extension will provide more time for provinces and territories to prepare their health care systems which includes: the development of regulations, guidance, and additional resources to assess and provide MAiD in situations where a person's sole underlying medical condition is a mental illness. In addition, it will provide practitioners with more time to participate in training and become familiar with available supports, guidelines, and standards.

Diversity and Inclusion

Navigating the complexities and cultivating appreciation of diversity, equity, and inclusion is a long-standing work of the Ethics and Discernment Centre. Although sometimes captured in other terms—e.g., ‘social justice’, ‘compassionate encounter’, ‘respect for human dignity’—the principled commitments we commonly associate with EDI work today underpin the Centre’s vision and Covenant Health’s Mission. We are grateful for the opportunity join many others in living out these foundational values.

Over the past year we have observed growing interest across the organization to pursue initiatives that foster greater awareness, understanding, and appreciation for the rich diversity present in our staff, physician, and volunteer workforce. Covenant’s three Advisory Bodies (Indigenous, Black, LGBTQ2S+) continue to grow their presence and influence as leaders and staff seek guidance in various areas including respectful communication, safe and effective patient care, and inclusive and psychologically safe work environments.

In an effort to better understand the support and learning needs related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within the organization, the Centre began to capture basic statics on consultation requests. The consult reporting here differs from the ethics consultation above—the data below is not accounted for in the EDC’s ethics consultation database (though similar themes may exist there). Diversity and Inclusion consultations are captured in a separate database and reflect distinct consult request pathways. The graphs below reflect activity-based benchmarking and the Indigenous themes (care, education, resources, Reconciliation, etc.) are present in greater than half of the total consultation requests.



Ensuring accessibility to safe, quality, effective care is a central tenet of the COV Interpretive Services program, also an important marker of Covenant’s commitment to Diversity and Inclusion. Since starting to offer formal Interpretive and Translation Service supports, use of these services has grown each year. Beginning in 2025, the EDC will integrate interpretive services data in its annual reporting process.

Central to our commitment to social justice is our aim to create opportunities for cultural change. To this end, Diversity and Inclusion worked collaboratively with Homewood Health to develop a Bystander training session for all staff. This training module specifically responds to staff requests, as evidenced in the Anti-Racism Report, for tools to assist them in addressing racist, homophobic, ableist, and sexist comments and actions they frequently encounter in their work. The Bystander Training session will launch in April 2024 as a compliment to the Microaggressions session held earlier this year.

2024 | WORLD'S MOST ETHICAL COMPANIES[®] TM ETHISPHERE

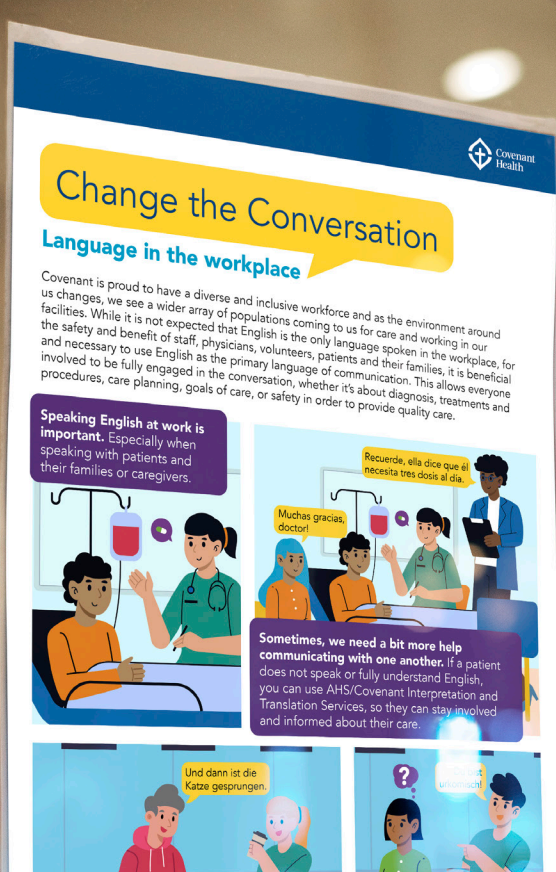
Ethisphere

Ethisphere is an annual evidence-based, third-party evaluation of our business ethics programming and practices. For years, Covenant Health has voluntarily participated in this annual Ethisphere application process and for the ninth consecutive year, Covenant Health has been recognized by Ethisphere as a World's Most Ethical Companies[®].

This consistent recognition provides validation for Covenant Health's ongoing work and dedication to mission, quality, and resource stewardship. This recognition, along with the benchmarking process sets expectations for continuing to model exemplary ethical business practices and for addressing improvement opportunities identified through the Ethisphere process.

Covenant Health continues to participate in this voluntary annual Ethisphere application process because our organization provides exceptional programs, ethical business practices and commits to advancing business integrity. We want to ensure that our organization is providing high quality services and that we have the trust and confidence of those we serve.

Congratulations to all on this prestigious recognition.



Languages in the Workplace

Language in the workplace has been an issue considered by the Diversity and Inclusion Council several times over the past years. While the discussions have been on-going, two recent events lead to the request for a working group review and recommended approach by the Diversity and Inclusion Council. This included the issue being cited as a concern in the Systemic Racism Assessment report completed in 2022 for Covenant. Review of the recommendations from the report aligned with a request for review of new materials addressing language in the workplace used by AHS and the possible adoption of these by Covenant. The materials include visual animated posters that are easy to understand and interpret.

We see an increasingly diverse population coming to us for care and applying to work in our care facilities. Language in the workplace is one of the issues that continues to present itself in many different scenarios. This could be situations where patients and residents struggle to understand and be fully engaged in a conversation about their health diagnosis, care planning, or Goals of Care.

Language in the Workplace is a complex issue. There are situations when using languages other than English is appropriate by point of care staff. There are other times when the use of a language interpreter is the best and other situations when using English is required. Different scenarios require different solutions. Each scenario requires some discernment as to what the best practice is to reach the most favorable result for the person we are serving. This broadens the focus from English in the workplace to consider what is the best language in the situation to an inclusive environment and best meet the care and communication needs.

We have interpretive services for situations where we are providing information and are partnering with patients, residents, and families to determine the best care path. However, the point of care may be a place where staff who speak the same language as the person they are caring for could enhance the care experience by speaking a language other than English.

A small working group was formed from the Diversity and Inclusion Council to address the request noted above. The Working Group includes members from HR, Organizational Development, Leadership from Rural Health and Urban Health/Operations and Communications. There has been collaboration with, and feedback sought from the Patient Resident and Family Advisory Committee, Human Resources Director/Managers and the Quality Patient Safety and Experience Director.

The working group has developed a principle-based framework to guide the use of language in the workplace, with a focus on the principles of Safety, Quality, Inclusion, Diversity. This framework would encourage situation specific assessment of the appropriate language to be used in a particular setting encouraging the care provider/care team to assess the benefits of employing a shared language with the patient/resident/family they are interacting with and the times when the language of record/business (English) is used.

The principle-based model was endorsed by Covenant's senior leadership and presented to the Policy Governance Committee. It was determined that a policy and implementation tools be developed for the Covenant Family to support effective operationalization of the new model.

Acknowledgments

We were honoured this year, once again, by the many hours and efforts contributed to the work of the Centre by dozens of volunteers. Our report is, if nothing else, an acknowledgment of the commitment and support of both Covenant Health's staff and physicians as well as our gracious, dedicated community. We acknowledged the significant contributions to the Ethics and Discernment Centre of the following groups and individuals.

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