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Hospice Ethics: Policy and Practice in Palliative Care

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Hospice care is one of the fastest-growing segments of the U. S. healthcare system, a trend that is expected to accelerate as the median age of the population continues to rise over the next three decades. Despite over forty percent of the population now dying while on hospice care, very little has been published on the ethical opportunities and challenges experienced in the everyday lives of those giving and receiving hospice care.

This book is the first comprehensive collection devoted to analyzing distinctive ethical issues arising in the delivery of hospice care and designed to promote best ethical practices for hospice care professionals and organizations. Thirteen newly commissioned chapters by seventeen hospice experts populate three thematic sections of the book, each devoted to an aspect of the intersection between ethics and hospice care. Contributors have unique qualifications and abilities to articulate and respond to ethically significant phenomena that -- while not always unique to hospice care -- arise in especially poignant and complex ways when caring for patients enrolled in hospice.

As the shift or return to home-based care at the end of life continues, hospice professionals and programs will be faced with a broader array of terminal illnesses, cultural beliefs and traditions, and patient and family values than ever before. Hospice will no longer be tailored solely to the final stage of cancer, but will need to accommodate patients whose illnesses are variable in their progression and whose treatment plans include many medical options. The ethical orientations and frameworks that have served hospice for the past 50 years will need to be supplemented and refined if hospice is to fulfill this changing social mission. *Hospice Ethics* explores a new paradigm for hospice ethics from a multi-disciplinary and provides an important educational resource for professional training in end of life care.

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