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Biweekly Ethics Update

1 message

The NCBC <info@ncbcenter.org> Tue, Feb 3, 2026 at 11:30 AM
Reply-To: info@ncbcenter.org
To: prolife@archkck.org

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC BIOETHICS CENTER

Biweekly Ethics Update

Making Sense of Bioethics

Opioids, Pain Management, and Addiction - Balancing Ethical Duties

Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D.

"Almost two million Americans are now addicted to opioids. The National Institute on Drug Abuse notes that more than 100 people die each day in the U.S. from opioid overdoses. This unprecedented level of abuse — which involves not only heroin, but also prescription pain relievers such as OxyContin, Percocet, morphine, codeine, and fentanyl — has become a national crisis. Reportedly, about 80 percent of heroin addicts first misused pre-scription opioids. Yet for many patients, no pain-relieving options more effective than opioids exist. Figuring out how to use these powerful pharmacological agents in an appropriate and ethical manner is urgent and imperative."

...to continue reading, click **here**.

Announcements

On January 26, 2026, NCBC Executive Vice President John F. Brehany published a **chapter**, "Catholic Vaccine Ethics: Reexamining the Role of Virtues, Moral Principles, and Magisterial Teachings" in the **book**, *Emerging Issues in Catholics Bioethics Philosophy & Medicine 153*, (Springer Verlag). The chapter strives to provide a comprehensive framework for assessing the challenging questions which have arisen over the last five years concerning novel vaccines and vaccine mandates.

Education Corner

Registration for the Midyear 2026 NCBC Certification Program course is now open! Online classes begin February 23, 2026. **Register** today.

The NCBC **Certification Program** is a 30-week (nine-month), online, immersive study in Catholic health care ethics designed for busy professionals. It prepares participants to apply Catholic moral teaching and the Church's authoritative guidance to resolve complex ethical dilemmas encountered in clinical practice, medical education, and research.

For further information about the Certification Program, please contact Joe Zalot, NCBC Director of Education, at **215-871-2014** or **jzalot@ncbcenter.org**.

Additionally, we will be hosting another two-day seminar in Tempe, AZ, on March 13-14, 2026, to address current topics in bioethics. These seminars are intended to benefit students, health care workers, clergy, those involved in research in the life sciences, members of ethics committees, and others who provide spiritual support and counsel to patients and their families. Those interested in understanding and advancing the Church's moral tradition in health care will also find them accessible, educational, and informative. For more information on our two-day seminars, click **here**. To register for this seminar, click **here**.

Sign Up for NCBC Education Programs

Bioethics and Public Policy

Bioethics Public Policy Report

The NCBC's update on public policy developments in bioethics and health care on the state, federal, and international levels.

Purchase NCBC Books and Resources

Video, Radio, and Podcasts

How Should We Be Funding Modern Research Science?

LA Catholic Morning on Archangel Radio
Father Tad joins co-hosts Todd Sylvester and Ellen Taylor to discuss the National Institutes of Health's decision to no longer fund scientific grants and biomedical research that rely on the use of cells and tissues from elective abortions. They also look at the claim, often put forward by researchers, that the availability of these cells is absolutely essential for the continued progress of research, as in the situation where scientists have generated "humanized mice" by using fetal liver stem cells derived from direct abortions. The reality is that various alternative ways to produce humanized

mice exist that do not require the use of fetal liver cells derived from direct abortions. They discuss the need for full accountability from scientists and research agencies so that only ethically-sound approaches to making advances and therapies are pursued and funded.

Surrogacy Gone Wild

Morning Air
In this segment of Relevant Radio's *Morning Air* talk show, NCBC Senior Ethicist Joseph Meaney shares the truth about surrogacy and the degradation of the sanctity of human life that follows, mentioning the story of a Chinese billionaire who fathered over a hundred children in the United States through surrogacy. Meaney also shares that there are many ethical alternatives to infertility through restorative reproductive medicine.

Invite an NCBC Speaker

NCBC in the News

White House Bans Use of Aborted Baby Tissue in Federally Funded Research

PJ Media
Father Tad Pacholczyk of the NCBC comments on the January 23rd decision of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) that it will stop funding research that uses fetal tissue of aborted babies. The National Institutes of Health, which administers most HHS medical research funding, will apply the new ban across all NIH-supported intramural and extramural research, including grants, cooperative agreements, other transaction awards, and research and development contracts. Father Tad notes that biomedical research should not be built on the backs of directly-aborted human fetuses or embryos, and doing so involves a failure to obtain valid informed consent, a key ethical principle guiding all modern bioresearch.

NIH Says It Will Stop Funding Reseach Using Human Fetal Tissue

The Washington Post and the Anchorage Daily News
The recent NIH decision to stop funding for research that relies on fetal tissue of aborted babies is a welcome development, opines Father Tad Pacholczyk, senior ethicist at the NCBC. He notes that several previous U.S. administrations dropped the ethical ball when it came to allowing human fetal tissues from elective abortions to be used in NIH-funded scientific investigations, so that, in effect, they set up a situation where fetal-tissue research faced very few practical barriers or limitations.

Catholics Express Mixed Views On First Year of Trump's Second Term

National Catholic Register
During the second term of the current administration, Father Tad Pacholczyk of the NCBC comments on how significant energy has been focused on the task of 'putting folks on notice,' sending shock waves in the direction of the medico-pharmaceutical industry which has profited handsomely from exploiting vulnerable youth and other gender dysphoric individuals. These signals are not hard to miss and are strong indicators that these practices will not be able to continue unabated. These actions by the administration are already also affecting public opinion.

Pro-life movement has mixed reaction after Trump's first year of second term

EWTN News
Commenting critically on how the second Trump administration has handled pro-life issues, NCBC Senior Ethicist Joseph Meaney states that it has, in some ways, deprioritized issues important to the pro-life community, adding that he has "seen calls for pro-life groups to 'flex their muscles' and show that they cannot be taken for granted." Regarding the leading method of doing abortions in the US, there has been a delay in the promised review of the rushed approval process for the abortion drug mifepristone as well

as FDA approval of a second generic version of mifepristone. In other ways, the administration has made progress, such as in rolling back Biden-era pro-abortion measures internationally and domestically, discontinuing the use of federal government funding on fetal tissues, and defending the conscience rights of health care professionals and others robustly. His remarks were also quoted in this **LifeSiteNews article** and this **PolitiFact article**.

Trump Tries to Pause Abortion Pill Lawsuit Over Louisiana Attorney General's Objections

EWTN News
President Donald Trump's Department of Justice (DOJ) is seeking to pause a lawsuit filed by the state of Louisiana that challenges the federal policy of allowing mail-order abortion pills, which has prompted strong criticism from the state's attorney general and pro-life advocates. Father Tad Pacholczyk of the NCBC notes that, "Politicians, the media, and many in the medical profession and the judiciary who promote mail-order availability of abortion pills across state jurisdictional lines have decided that abortion deserves an entirely different and lower standard than the rest of medicine."

Sign Up for NCBC Membership

Are you a doctor, nurse, patient, health care power of attorney, scientific researcher, medical student or resident, or someone else facing tough ethical decisions in health care and biomedical research? Are you a priest, chaplain, friend, family member, or someone else asked to advise on these matters? Our team is here to help you understand and apply the moral teachings of the Catholic Church to the challenges you face:

Request a Free Ethics Consultation

Please pray for our work and consider financially supporting our mission of defending the dignity of the human person in health care and biomedical research!

Make a Financial Gift

The National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) provides education, guidance, and resources to the Church and society to uphold the dignity of the human person in health care and biomedical research, thereby sharing in the ministry of Jesus Christ and his Church. The NCBC envisions a world in which the integral understanding of the human person underlying Catholic teaching on respect for human life and dignity is better understood and more widely embraced in America and worldwide.

The NCBC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and all donations are tax-deductible.

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