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Biweekly Ethics Update

1 message

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Tue, Jul 7, 2026 at 2:34 PM



Biweekly Ethics Update



Making Sense of Bioethics

The Wrong-Headedness of “Wrongful Birth” Lawsuits

Father Tad Pacholczyk, PhD

At its core, the idea of a “wrongful birth” claim is unreasonable and ethically incoherent. Parents who bring these lawsuits against obstetricians and hospitals claim that medical professionals should have detected a particular disease or defect in their unborn baby through prenatal testing and informed them about it. Had they been given this information, their argument continues, they would have chosen to abort their baby, rather than spending years of their lives caring for a less-than-perfect, possibly infirm child. Wrongful birth lawsuits enable the parents to seek legal redress, often in the form of multimillion dollar settlements.

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This installment of Making Sense of Bioethics is reprinted from an earlier version of Father Tad’s column. Reprints and subscriptions to this series are available from the NCBC for newspapers, parish

bulletins, newsletters, or journals. For information regarding subscriptions and permissions, please contact [Elizabeth Lee](#).

Announcements

Partnership with MyCatholicWill

The NCBC has partnered with MyCatholicWill, an online will-writing tool designed specifically for Catholics. In as little as 15 minutes, you can create a free, legally valid will that protects your family, honors your Catholic values, and allows you to consider a lasting gift to the NCBC's mission of equipping Catholics to live out their faith and uphold the dignity of the human person in health care and the life sciences.

No cost. No complexity. Just the peace of mind that comes from knowing your wishes are known and your legacy is secure.

Begin today at mycatholicwill.com/NCBCENTER.



NCBC Publications

Available Now: *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, Seventh Edition*

This seventh edition of the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* (ERDs) was approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in November 2025. The ERDs distill authoritative Church teachings and resources from the Catholic moral tradition to help Catholic health care address clinical issues across the lifespan, as well as in organizational ethics, with fidelity and integrity.

The ERDs present a theological basis for Catholic health care ministry together with specific directives that "promote and protect the truths of the Catholic faith as those truths are brought to bear on concrete issues in health care" (Preamble, p. 5). They are an indispensable resource for health care ministry sponsors, trustees,

administrators, chaplains, physicians, health care personnel, and patients, as well as for all professionals, ethicists, educators, and others interested in the principles and practice of Catholic health care.

The seventh edition of the ERDs includes updates and new content on topics including referral for immoral procedures, assisted reproductive technologies, palliative and hospice care, and medical interventions for those who experience gender incongruence.

Standard Pocket Size Version

To purchase, please click [here for smaller orders](#) (1-5 copies) or [here for bulk orders](#) (6 or more copies).

Ethical and
Religious
Directives for
Catholic Health
Care Services

Seventh Edition

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF
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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.

Sign Up for NCBC Education Programs

Video, Radio, and Podcasts

Improving Gene Editing by Experimenting on Embryos?

LA Catholic Morning on Archangel Radio

Father Tad joins Todd, Ellen, and Tom Riello to discuss the unethical research of Columbia University's Department of Pediatrics involving a technique called "base editing" to replace individual genetic letters in sequences of DNA. The study was done using human embryos, either obtained fresh by mixing sperm and

egg, or by recruiting embryo donations from couples who were abandoning their frozen children and ready to hand them on to be used as fodder for research experimentation. The human embryos produced in these experiments were destroyed to obtain their embryonic stem cells, which were used for additional research. The fact that various Review Boards at Columbia University granted their approval for these procedures and experiments speaks to the moral bankruptcy surrounding so many of these review entities at our renowned universities, which too often end up rubberstamping offensively unethical experiments if they can find even the thinnest shred of a rationale or justification for doing so.

Invite an NCBC Speaker

NCBC in the News

USCCB and pro-life leaders: Abortion pills remain key post-Dobbs challenge

OSV News

Commenting on the danger of accessibility to abortion pills, NCBC Senior Ethicist Dr. Marie Hilliard states that the NCBC "recognizes the threats not only to the unborn child, but also to women and girls having access to unsafe chemical abortion practices... Women and girls' very lives are being threatened by the current lack of regulatory requirements, and the lives of these mothers also must be protected, and hopefully the lives of their unborn children when these mothers are provided with all the information they need for true informed consent." The NCBC and colleague agencies recently filed an **amicus brief** seeking to strike down the FDA's 2023 rule that allows the abortifacient mifepristone to be prescribed via telehealth.

Pope Leo XIV's Call for AI Guardrails Is Resonating on Capitol Hill

National Catholic Register

NCBC Senior Ethicist Dr. Joseph Meaney comments on the need for more policy regulating artificial intelligence, particularly when it comes to the safety of children. Because the human brain does not fully mature until an individual's 20s, children's sense of self and

perception of the world can be harmed by the dissonance between objective reality and the narrative presented by AI.

Father Tad Pacholczyk and Guidance for Parents in Discussing Sexuality with Children

American Catholic Tribune

NCBC Senior Ethicist Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk discusses the concern of Catholic parents who are seeking ways to guide their children towards an appreciation of the beauty of sexuality in marriage amidst the challenges of their exposure to sexual content and pornography on the internet. He looks at the problem of relying solely on a single conversation, often called "The Talk," and the value of instead maintaining ongoing discussions with kids that emphasize the value of marital sexuality. Parents can use everyday situations that may arise with their children as opportunities for dialogue, such as commenting on inappropriate images in public or the media. He discusses the need for a patient parental willingness to guide and accompany youth through the modern tangles of a hyper-sexualized society.

Bishop McManus promulgates updated national health care directives in Worcester diocese

The Catholic Free Press

In his promulgation of the updated seventh edition of the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* in the Diocese of Worcester, Bishop Robert McManus quotes the **NCBC's November 2025 press statement** that highlights some of the most notable additions to the document, namely new directives addressing sex reassignment interventions, gender dysphoria, medical referrals, the freezing of human embryos and gametes, voluntary stopping of eating and drinking, and palliative care.

Indiana's Saint Anne eldercare campus opens hospice suites to provide holistic end-of-life care

Catholic Health World

NCBC Director of Education Joe Zalot was interviewed by Catholic Health World about presentations on ethical end-of-life care he will

be offering in mid-July at St. Joseph Hospice Suites in Fort Wayne, IN.

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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