



The Hospital of  
**St John & St Elizabeth**

30<sup>th</sup> September 2008

*Values of compassion and excellence*

Dear

A great many people comment on our Hospital's special spirit and the quality of the care they receive here, the way the Hospital welcomes people without regard to their religious background or affiliation. This is the ethos of the Hospital; and we are all rightly proud of it. Each of us contributes to this in a personal and unique way.

The ethos of the Hospital is built up and maintained by the ethics of the community who serve in it. Ethics are the moral principles and rules of conduct by which we agree to deal with each other and with all those in contact with the Hospital.

Sadly, in recent years, the Hospital's ethics have been a source of controversy. There has been heated debate and I do not wish to reopen it. The new Board of Trustees is committed to the Hospital's future.

We need, however, to have a plain statement of the Hospital's ethics. This is a requirement of good management and sound leadership and of fidelity to the Hospital's Roman Catholic foundation and character. A clear ethical stance is also a necessary reassurance to those who support us – the Church, our patients, charities, the charity commissioners, our bankers and those who volunteer to help with fund raising, and many others.

We have prepared a new statement of ethics and I am attaching a copy of it to this letter. HE the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster who is our patron, has given his endorsement of this statement and expressed his hope that the Hospital will now be able 'to move ahead towards renewed success in its important mission'. That is a hope I am sure we all share. Ethical challenges frequently arise as society or technology change. This statement therefore will need to be amended from time to time in the future.

Please read this statement carefully. It reaffirms the principles and requirements in the Hospital's previous Code of Ethics from 1999. It is basic to our relationships with each other. Please discuss this statement with your colleagues and line managers. Please continue, in your work, to be the human expression of these values and ethos which make our Hospital rightly so distinctive and special.

As you will see, a formal commitment is required of us all to abide by the requirements of the statement. I should therefore be grateful if you would sign and date the extra copy enclosed and return it to Chris Board in the envelope provided. If you wish to take up any questions about this statement, you are also welcome to contact the chairman of the board's ethics committee, Sir Mark Allen. He will be happy to meet you, privately or in a group, as you prefer.

Yours sincerely

General the Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank, GBC, LVO, OBE, DL  
Hospital Chairman

Signed .....

Dated ... ..



The Hospital of  
**St John & St Elizabeth**

100 Brookline Avenue, Boston, MA 02115

## **THE HOSPITAL OF ST JOHN AND ST ELIZABETH**

### **ETHICS**

Since its foundation in 1856, the hospital's mission has been to answer the call of Christ to show his compassion in service of the sick and needy without discrimination. The hospital's charitable status is rooted in this work of love and its integrity is safeguarded by the patronage of the Archbishop of Westminster.

The hospital's ethos is based on the Roman Catholic faith which encourages us to love and to serve others as best we can. The ethos is foundational and ambitious, welcome and respect for others, excellence in health care and medical services and support for the spiritual needs of those patients who seek it. In particular, the hospital uses its surplus income to fund its hospice.

Our hope is that all those who work at the hospital and support it, will feel able freely to share in upholding this spirit and these values. The good name and sustainability of the hospital are dependent on the respect we give to its mission, its charitable status, its ethos and its professionalism.

The teaching and example of Jesus Christ, through his self-giving, his example and his teaching, inspired the Apostles and consequently the Universal Church to live out the call to divine love and to proclaim it through respect for the sanctity and dignity of human life from conception to natural death. Christian ethics derive from this teaching. The interpretation of individual cases should always strive for the right assessment of the truth of the issue, leading to responsible action animated by love.

The ethical code of the hospital is the ethical teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and formal commitment to abide by this code is required of all those who work and practice in the hospital. Doctors and other staff are presumed to be of good will and good conscience. The confidentiality of their consultations with patients must be respected, as must the confidentiality of the advice which they offer to patients in accordance with their professional and legal obligations.

The hospital, however, cannot condone or permit practices in its name which conflict with Catholic teaching on the sanctity of life or respect for the human person. Questions of uncertainty about this teaching should be put to the Ethics Committee which is a sub-committee of the Board of Trustees. The committee is advised by experts and medical professionals. Ultimately, according to the statutes of the hospital, the final and conclusive arbiter of unresolved differences within the Board is the Archbishop of Westminster.

Annex A gives the names of the members of the Ethics Committee.

Annex B gives a summary list of actions, interventions and procedures which are in principle held to conflict with the Church's teaching and which may not be permitted within the hospital.

## **Annex A**

Sir Mark Allen – Chairman:                      ethicscommittee@hje.org.uk  
Mr Nicholas Coulson  
Mrs Monica Kerr  
Fr Mark O'Toole  
Matron  
Mr Carlos Cobiella

## **Annex B**

### Summary of actions, interventions and procedures which may be permitted by law, but which are not permissible in St John and St Elizabeth's

Legal and technological changes will continue to present us with new ethical questions. This summary is not exhaustive and the omission of an action, intervention or procedure from the list does not mean that it is considered unimportant or permissible.

1. Euthanasia – the directly intended termination of a patient's life by act or omission and this would include 'assisted suicide'
2. Procedures which directly intend contraceptive sterilization, whether male or female (including vasectomy and tubal ligation)
3. The insertion of IUDs for contraceptive purposes or any other intervention for such a purpose.
4. The use of amniocentesis or chorionic villus sampling without proportionate necessity
5. Procedures aimed at gender reassignment
6. Direct abortion
7. Artificial insemination either by husband or donor
8. In vitro fertilisation and embryo transfer

(It should be noted that the hospital is not licensed to carry out the procedures listed at 6-8 above)