
Graduate Certificate in Medico-Legal Studies

Health Law and Policy

Advance Directives: Legal documents that allow individuals to express their preferences regarding medical treatment in advance, in case they become incapacitated and unable to communicate their wishes. These directives may include living wills, durable power of attorney for healthcare, do not resuscitate (DNR) orders, and organ donation preferences.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ): A federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that conducts research on healthcare quality, outcomes, and patient safety. AHRQ provides evidence-based information to help improve the quality of healthcare services.

American Medical Association (AMA): A professional organization representing physicians and medical students in the United States. The AMA promotes ethical standards in medicine, advocates for healthcare policies that benefit patients and physicians, and provides educational resources for healthcare professionals.

Antitrust Laws: Laws that regulate competition in the marketplace and prevent monopolies or unfair business practices. In the healthcare industry, antitrust laws aim to promote competition among healthcare providers, insurers, and pharmaceutical companies to ensure fair pricing and quality of care.

Bioethics: The study of ethical issues arising from advances in biology and medicine, including topics such as informed consent, end-of-life care, genetic testing, and human subjects research. Bioethics seeks to balance the benefits of medical progress with the ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice.

Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS): A federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that administers the Medicare and Medicaid programs. CMS sets standards for healthcare quality, oversees payment systems for healthcare providers, and implements regulations to ensure the integrity of healthcare services.

Civil Rights Act of 1964: A landmark federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in various settings, including employment, education, and public accommodations. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 has implications for healthcare providers and organizations in terms of equal access to care and non-discrimination.

Clinical Practice Guidelines: Evidence-based recommendations for healthcare providers to guide clinical decision-making and improve patient outcomes. Clinical practice guidelines are developed by expert panels using systematic reviews of the medical literature and are intended to standardize care based on the best available evidence.

Confidentiality: The ethical and legal duty of healthcare providers to protect the privacy of patient information and not disclose it without the patient's consent. Confidentiality is essential for maintaining trust between patients and providers, as well as complying with laws such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Consent: Permission granted by a patient or legal representative before a healthcare provider can perform a medical procedure, administer treatment, or disclose confidential information. Informed consent requires that patients be provided with relevant information about their care options, risks, benefits, and alternatives so they can make decisions autonomously.

Consumer-driven Healthcare: A model of healthcare delivery in which patients have greater control over their healthcare decisions, including choice of providers, treatment options, and health insurance plans. Consumer-driven healthcare emphasizes transparency, cost-consciousness, and patient empowerment in navigating the healthcare system.

Cost-effectiveness Analysis: A method used to evaluate the value of healthcare interventions by comparing their costs to their outcomes in terms of health benefits. Cost-effectiveness analysis helps policymakers, insurers, and providers make decisions about resource allocation and prioritize interventions that offer the greatest health impact for the cost.

Credentialing: The process by which healthcare providers are assessed for their qualifications, training, licensure, and experience to ensure they meet the standards of professional practice. Credentialing is typically conducted by healthcare organizations, insurance companies, and government agencies to verify the competence and eligibility of providers to deliver care.

Criminal Law: The branch of law that deals with crimes, punishments, and legal proceedings related to criminal offenses. In healthcare, criminal law may apply to cases of fraud, abuse, negligence, malpractice, and other violations of laws and regulations governing the delivery of healthcare services.

Defensive Medicine: The practice of ordering unnecessary tests, procedures, or treatments primarily to protect healthcare providers from malpractice lawsuits rather than to benefit patients. Defensive medicine may result in higher healthcare costs, overutilization of resources, and potential harm to patients from unwarranted interventions.

Electronic Health Record (EHR): A digital record of a patient's medical history, diagnoses, treatments, medications, and other healthcare information stored in an electronic format. EHRs enable healthcare providers to access and share patient data securely, improve care coordination, and enhance clinical decision-making.

Evidence-based Medicine: The integration of the best available research evidence, clinical expertise, and patient values in making healthcare decisions. Evidence-based medicine emphasizes the use of scientific evidence from well-designed studies to inform clinical practice and improve patient outcomes.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA): A federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services responsible for regulating the safety and efficacy of food, drugs, medical devices, biologics, and cosmetics. The FDA reviews and approves new products, monitors their post-market safety, and enforces regulations to protect public health.

Health Economics: A subfield of economics that studies the production, distribution, and consumption of healthcare goods and services, as well as the behavior of healthcare providers, insurers, and consumers. Health economics examines the impact of policies, interventions, and market forces on the cost and quality of healthcare.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA): A federal law that establishes privacy and security standards for protecting patients' health information. HIPAA regulates the use and disclosure of protected health information by healthcare providers, insurers, and other entities to safeguard patient privacy and confidentiality.

Health Law: The branch of law that governs the rights, duties, and responsibilities of individuals and organizations in the healthcare industry. Health law encompasses a wide range of legal issues related to patient care, provider reimbursement, medical practice, research ethics, public health, and healthcare regulation.

Health Policy: The decisions, actions, and plans adopted by governments, organizations, and stakeholders to address healthcare challenges, improve public health, and enhance healthcare delivery. Health policy involves setting priorities, allocating resources, designing interventions, and evaluating outcomes to achieve better health outcomes for populations.

Healthcare Quality: The degree to which healthcare services provided to patients meet established standards of safety, effectiveness, timeliness, efficiency, equity, and patient-centeredness. Healthcare quality is measured by clinical outcomes, patient satisfaction, adherence to guidelines, and other indicators of performance and value.

Healthcare Reform: The process of changing healthcare policies, systems, and practices to improve access, affordability, quality, and outcomes in the healthcare system. Healthcare reform initiatives may focus on expanding insurance coverage, controlling costs, promoting preventive care, and enhancing care coordination to achieve better health for populations.

Healthcare Regulatory Agencies: Government agencies at the federal, state, and local levels responsible for overseeing and enforcing laws and regulations related to healthcare delivery, public health, and patient safety. Healthcare regulatory agencies set standards, conduct inspections, investigate complaints, and take enforcement actions to ensure compliance with healthcare laws.

Informed Consent: The process of obtaining voluntary agreement from a patient or legal representative after providing relevant information about a proposed medical treatment, procedure, or research study.

Informed consent requires that patients understand the risks, benefits, alternatives, and consequences of their decisions to make informed choices about their care.

Insurance Coverage: The extent to which an insurance policy pays for healthcare services, medications, and medical treatments on behalf of the insured individual or group. Insurance coverage may vary in terms of deductibles, copayments, premiums, networks, and covered benefits, influencing access to care and out-of-pocket costs for patients.

Legal Liability: The legal responsibility of individuals, organizations, or entities for their actions or omissions that cause harm or injury to others. Legal liability in healthcare may arise from negligence, malpractice, breach of duty, fraud, abuse, or other violations of laws and regulations governing the provision of care.

Managed Care: A healthcare delivery system that emphasizes cost-effective, coordinated, and quality care through the use of networks, utilization management, and financial incentives. Managed care organizations (MCOs) may include health maintenance organizations (HMOs), preferred provider organizations (PPOs), and accountable care organizations (ACOs) that contract with providers to deliver care to enrollees.

Medical Ethics: The moral principles and values that guide the practice of medicine and healthcare professionals in their interactions with patients, colleagues, and society. Medical ethics address issues such as patient autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, confidentiality, informed consent, and end-of-life care to ensure ethical decision-making in healthcare.

Medical Malpractice: The legal concept that holds healthcare providers liable for negligence, errors, or omissions in patient care that result in harm, injury, or death. Medical malpractice lawsuits seek to compensate patients for damages caused by substandard medical treatment and may involve allegations of breach of duty, causation, and damages.

Medicare: A federal health insurance program in the United States that provides coverage for individuals aged 65 and older, certain younger people with disabilities, and individuals with end-stage renal disease. Medicare consists of different parts (A, B, C, D) that cover hospital care, medical services, prescription drugs, and managed care options for beneficiaries.

Medicaid: A joint federal and state health insurance program in the United States that provides coverage for low-income individuals, families, children, pregnant women, elderly adults, and people with disabilities. Medicaid offers a range of benefits, including primary care, hospital services, long-term care, and behavioral health services to eligible beneficiaries.

Medical Records: Documentation of a patient's medical history, diagnoses, treatments, medications, allergies, and other healthcare information maintained by healthcare providers. Medical records serve as a legal record of care, support clinical decision-making, facilitate communication among providers, and ensure continuity of care for patients across settings.

Negligence: The failure of a healthcare provider to exercise reasonable care, skill, or judgment in delivering medical treatment that results in harm, injury, or damages to a patient. Negligence may involve acts of commission (e.g., errors in treatment) or omission (e.g., failure to diagnose) that breach the standard of care expected of a prudent provider.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): A federal agency within the U.S. Department of Labor that sets and enforces standards for workplace safety and health to protect employees from hazards, injuries, and illnesses. OSHA regulations apply to various industries, including healthcare, to ensure a safe working environment for employees and patients.

Patient Rights: Legal and ethical principles that protect the autonomy, dignity, privacy, and well-being of individuals seeking healthcare services. Patient rights include the right to informed consent, confidentiality, access to medical records, choice of providers, quality care, non-discrimination, and grievance resolution to empower patients in their care decisions.

Public Health Law: The legal framework that governs the promotion and protection of the health of populations through policies, regulations, interventions, and collaborations. Public health law addresses issues such as disease prevention, environmental health, emergency preparedness, vaccination requirements, health disparities, and health promotion strategies to improve community health outcomes.

Quality Improvement: The systematic process of assessing, monitoring, and enhancing the quality of healthcare services to improve patient outcomes, safety, and satisfaction. Quality improvement initiatives involve measuring performance, identifying areas for improvement, implementing changes, and evaluating results to optimize the delivery of care and achieve better health outcomes.

Risk Management: The process of identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks to prevent adverse events, errors, or liabilities in healthcare settings. Risk management strategies may include patient safety protocols, error reporting systems, incident investigations, staff training, quality assurance measures, and insurance coverage to protect patients, providers, and organizations from harm and losses.

Stark Law: A federal law that prohibits physicians from referring patients for certain designated health services to entities with which they have financial relationships, unless an exception applies. The Stark Law aims to prevent conflicts of interest, self-referral practices, overutilization of services, and fraudulent billing in healthcare by promoting transparency and accountability.

Telemedicine: The use of telecommunications technology to provide remote clinical services, consultations, monitoring, and education to patients at a distance. Telemedicine enables healthcare providers to deliver care virtually, expand access to underserved populations, improve care coordination, and enhance patient engagement through secure communication platforms and digital tools.

Universal Health Coverage: A healthcare system that ensures all individuals have access to essential health services without financial hardship. Universal health coverage aims to provide equitable, affordable, and

high-quality care to populations, regardless of their socioeconomic status, geographic location, or health condition, to achieve universal health outcomes and reduce disparities.

Value-based Care: A healthcare delivery model that focuses on improving patient outcomes, enhancing patient experience, and reducing costs by rewarding providers based on the value, rather than volume, of services delivered. Value-based care emphasizes care coordination, preventive services, population health management, and patient-centered approaches to achieve better health outcomes and value for patients.

Whistleblower Protection: Legal safeguards that protect employees, contractors, or individuals who report misconduct, fraud, waste, abuse, or violations of laws within an organization. Whistleblower protection laws provide avenues for reporting concerns confidentially, investigating allegations, preventing retaliation, and holding accountable those who engage in unethical or illegal activities in healthcare settings.