

Exploring Ethics: Must Medicine Become Trash?

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

12 – 1 pm (ET)

Webex

Program Overview

To help mitigate climate change, efforts are underway to reduce the U.S. health sector's greenhouse gas emissions. A key strategy is resource stewardship regarding medical devices and supplies, systematically moving away from single uses of disposable items toward sustainable uses of durable items. There are fears, however, that any move away from disposability toward sustainability must be traded off against core ethical commitments to safety, efficacy, and efficiency in healthcare. At the same time, industrial healthcare waste management practices cause environmental harms, like air and water pollution, that disproportionately impact the health of disadvantaged communities. In this talk, the speaker reflects on key examples of apparent tradeoffs and explores prospects for harmonizing clinical safety, efficacy, and efficiency with sustainability and environmental justice.

Who Should Participate

Physicians, PAs, NPs, nurses, hospital chaplains, clergy, social workers, psychologists, counselors, allied health professionals and all others interested in emerging ethical issues in health care.

As part of our commitment to diversity and inclusion, the Northwest AHEC provides compassionate education and respectful care for all, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, geography, disability and age.

Faculty



Maria W. Merritt, PhD

Professor, Berman Institute of Bioethics
Professor, Bloomberg School of Public Health
Johns Hopkins University

Maria W. Merritt earned a BS in Biology at Wake Forest, a BA in Philosophy and Modern Languages at the University of Oxford, and a PhD in Philosophy at University of California, Berkeley, followed by a postdoctoral fellowship in the Department of Bioethics at the National Institutes of Health. She is a Professor in the Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics and in the Department of International Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Health. Much of her scholarship has addressed ethical issues in international public health research and practice. Her current interests include: social justice in health-related policy decision making, with special attention to health care equity and climate justice in de-carbonizing health systems; how academic research institutions can best partner with communities to align the scientific agenda with community members' own vision of a healthy life, specifically in the context of epidemiological research on infectious diseases sensitive to climate change; and nurturing the capacity for wonder in educational settings for health professionals.

Provided by:

Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Health Clinical Ethics Committee and Northwest Area Health Education Center (AHEC), a program of Wake Forest University School of Medicine and a part of the NC AHEC System.

Exploring Ethics

2024 – 2025 Series



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[Register online at www.nwahec.org/74140](https://www.nwahec.org/74140)

Registration

This interdisciplinary activity is free, however, you must pre-register by 10 AM (ET) on December 17 to be able to attend.

Note — By registering for this activity, your name and email address may be shared with Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Clinical Ethics Committee, which is a joint provider of this continuing education activity.

Objectives

Upon completion of this knowledge-based program, participants should be able to:

- Gain awareness of disposability in healthcare as a systemic contributor to adverse health impacts.
- Identify three ways in which sustainable uses of durable items in healthcare may promote environmental justice for communities historically affected by healthcare waste management practices such as incineration.
- Critically assess apparent ethical trade-offs between sustainability and core values of healthcare.

Credit

- 1.0 Contact Hour from Northwest AHEC
Nurses: This educational activity (1.0 contact hour) can be applied toward your continuing competence plan for maintaining your current licensure with the North Carolina Board of Nursing.
- 1.0 Contact Hour (Category A) CE for NC Psychologists
Northwest AHEC is recognized by the North Carolina Psychology Board as an approved provider of (Category A) Continuing Education for North Carolina Licensed Psychologists. This program will provide 1.0 contact hour of (Category A) continuing education for North Carolina psychologists. No partial credit will be given.

Before selecting credits, please review our general [Credit Glossary](#) but note not all programs offer all credits.

For additional information contact Samantha Garvens at 336-713-7754 or sagarvens@wakehealth.edu