

Nursing During a Global Pandemic

15th Annual Nursing Research Conference

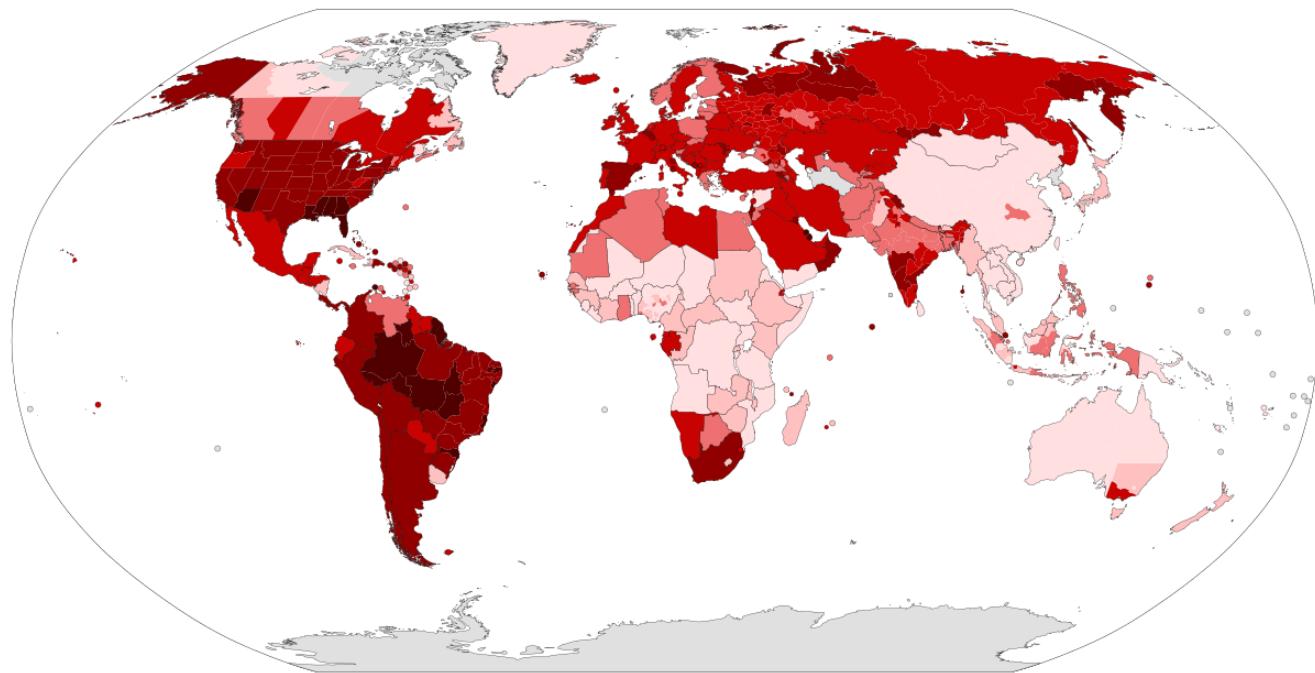
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Objectives

- Identify the ethical dilemmas encountered during a public health emergency
- Describe the ethical challenges and sources of moral distress facing nurses during a global pandemic

A Global Public
Health Crisis



A Global Public Health Crisis

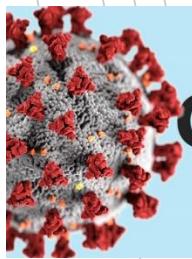


A Focus on Public Health

- Isolation, quarantine and civil liberties
- Public cooperation
- The limits of government
- Protection of vulnerable citizens
- Informed communication

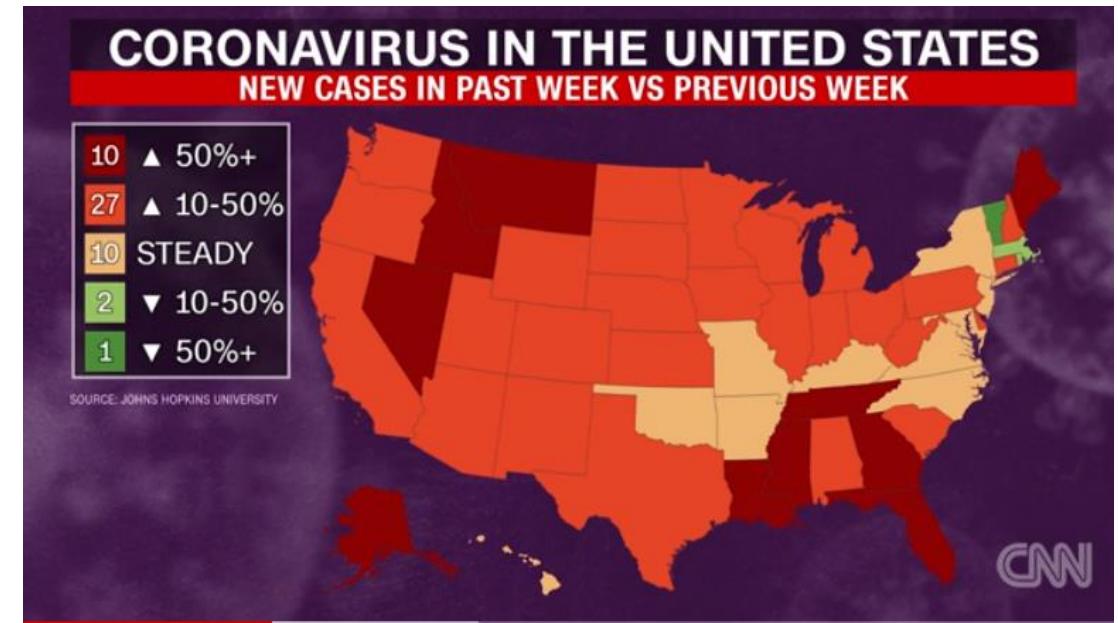


When a Healthcare System is Strained



COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

- Response and Communication
- Triage
- Ethical Allocation of Limited Resources



Ethical Duties of Health Care Leaders

Plan

- Identify triage decisions
- Tools
- Processes

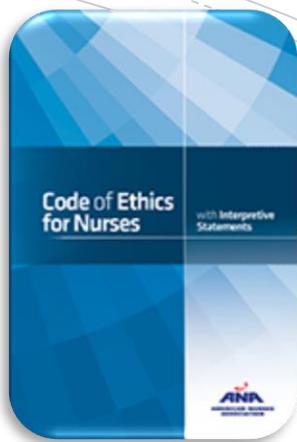
Safeguard

- Protect healthcare workers
- Support healthcare workers
- Protect vulnerable populations (employed trainees)

Guide

- Contingency levels of care
- Crisis Standards of Care





Responsibility of Nurse leaders

- Nurse executives are responsible for ensuring that nurses have access to and inclusion on committee and in decision-making processes that affect **ethics, quality and safety of patient care** (ANA Code of Ethics)
- The nurse administrator supports a milieu in which nurses at all levels can deal openly with moral and ethical questions and intra- and interprofessional quality and safety concerns (Nursing Administration: Scope and Standards of Practice)

Ethical Approaches to Public Health Emergencies

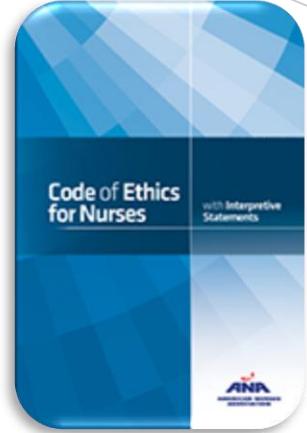
Utilitarian Approach

- *Balancing the good of an individual patient with the good of a group of patients or society at large*



Collaboration for Human Rights in Complex, Extreme, or Extraordinary Practice Settings

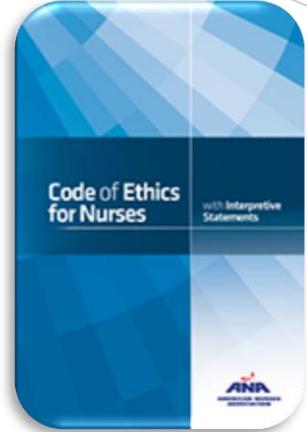
A utilitarian framework usually guides decisions and actions with special emphasis on transparency, protection of the public, proportional restriction on individual liberty, and fair stewardship of resources... collaborating with public health officials and members of the healthcare team are essential throughout the event.



Collaboration for Human Rights in Complex, Extreme, or Extraordinary Practice Settings

Human rights may be jeopardized in extraordinary contexts related to ... pandemics.

Nurses must always stress human rights protection with particular attention to preserving the human rights of vulnerable groups such as the poor, the homeless, the elderly, the mentally ill, prisoners, refugees, women, children, and socially stigmatized groups.



Ethical Principles in Allocation of Scarce Clinical Resources



Ethical Principle	Application
Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proactively develop a standard policy of allocation• Clinically similar patients are treated the same, regardless of age, race, social standing, or immigration status
Beneficence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rely on and prioritize evidence-based indication• Prioritize curative intent over palliation

Ethical Approaches to Allocation

Social or Instrumental Value Criteria



Fair Innings Approach



Sickest First, or “Rule of Rescue”



First Come, First Served

1

Ethical Approaches to Allocation

No allocation scenario exists
that does not result in a worse
outcome for some patients...



Allocation Guiding Principles

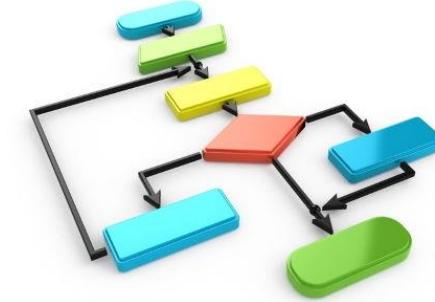
- Openness
- Transparency
- Inclusiveness
- Public engagement
- Accountability

“Do the most good for the most people and be fair and equitable and transparent in the process.”

Organizational Strategies for Allocation

Allocation Committee

- Interprofessional (administration, nursing, social work, physician, ethics committee member)
- Standardize allocation protocol
- Apply ethical decision-making principles
- Make prioritization decisions that are applied equitably to patients
- Provide an appeal process for patients and families who have been affected by allocation decisions



Crisis Standards of Care

- “*A substantial change in usual healthcare operations and the level of care it is possible to deliver, which is made necessary by a pervasive disaster.*” (IOM, 2012)
 - *Focus resources on those who will benefit and exclude those who will die even with treatment*
 - *Offer palliative care to those who do not meet criteria for limited resources*



Crisis Standards of Care

When critical care resources are not available...

- Patients may be added to a waiting list
- Patients are reevaluated at regular intervals
- Resources could be **withdrawn** and reallocated to other patients



Role of the Ethics Services

- Clinical ethics consultation
- Resources and support for clinicians
- Participation in development of crisis standards of care
- Preparation for implementation of crisis standards of care
- Participation in resource allocation committees
- Collaboration with healthcare institutions and public health officials



Ethical Challenges for Nurses

- Quality of Patient Care
- Competency
- Professional Ethics
- Personal Issues



Quality of Care

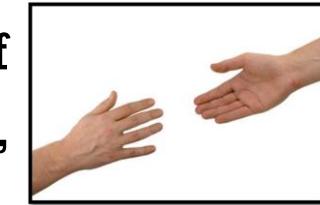
Delivery of Care

- Telehealth, virtual communication, changes to family centered rounds, remote care team members



Patient Care

- Loss of physical presence, touch; lack of emotional support for patients, families, visitor restrictions



Resources and Supplies

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), interrupted supply chains, technology



Competency

Reallocation and redeployment of staff

- Lack of knowledge and skills

Delegation of tasks and duties

- External staff

Relocation of specialty patients

- Cohort units



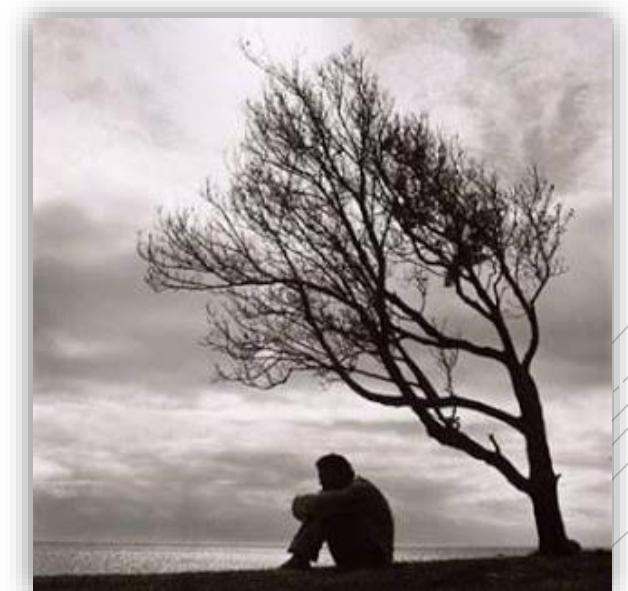
Professional Ethics

- Primary commitment to the patient vs. duty to self, family
- Challenge to provide care when the nature of the nurse's work involves increased risk of exposure
- Racial disparities in health outcomes
- Neglected patient rights



Personal Issues

- Separation from loved ones
- Isolation, loneliness
- Furloughs, lost wages
- Child care and responsibilities
 - Home-schooling
- Family needs
- Concern for colleagues
- Guilt
- Loss of patients



Moral Distress

- Nurses are constrained from providing high quality of care
- Professional ethical obligations conflict with personal values and priorities



The Year of the Nurse

(ANA, 2020)

Heroes

- Extraordinary risk
- Face dangers and death
- Prove oneself



“Martyrdom is certainly not ethical, obligatory, nor inherent in the nurse’s duty to care”

Moral Agency



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