Eileen E. Morrison & Beth Furlong. <u>Health Care Ethics; Critical Issues for the 21st Century, 3rd edition</u>. Burlington , Massachusetts: Jones and Bartlett Learning, 2014 (prepublication), 438 pages.

Reviewed by *Allen Zagoren DO, MPA* , Associate Professor of Public Administration, College of Business and Public administration, Drake University

Subject Area: Business and Society

The health care Industry according to the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Actuary, will in a few years represent one-fifth of the U.S. Economy (approximately 20% of the U.S. GDP). With the 2010 passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, commonly known as the Affordable Care Act or "Obamacare," there is renewed focus and discussion of the impact healthcare has on our economy and society. Full academic exploration of the impact of health care policy requires a sound knowledge of health care ethics.

A search engine of the topic, "health care ethics," reveals more than 39 million results, suggesting that the topic permeates into many elements of our academic and nonacademic culture. Graduate study specifically requires a solid grounding of basic ethics, leading to an in-depth evaluation of health policy and its associated ethical conundrums. Twenty first century healthcare has become so complex and that an in-depth knowledge of the current ethical thought which underpins the latest ethical debates is necessary in order to discuss the implications of new technologies and newer paradigms facing healthcare institutions and participants.

To this end, Morrison and Furlong have revised and updated their already popular treatise and created an in-depth and focused look at the topic of ethics and the many nuanced components that are contained therein.

Written as a text, the book introduces the topic of ethics and then moves to the various areas of impact that health care brings to the broader ethics discussion. The text can, however, stand alone as a resource guide when investigating subtopics within the healthcare lexicon.

Included in the book is an online resource guide and navigation companion that aides in understanding the various concepts and chapters presented. The navigation guide and the resource center are easily traversed and provide further in-depth information for each of the chapters and cases presented. There is also an interactive glossary which further explains and expands occasionally vague and somewhat technical language used in the ethics conversation. Web links, matching questions and interactive flash cards enable the reader (student and instructor alike) to navigate and coordinate information.

This online resource guide allows the instructor to create both online as well as classroom learning activities which enhance the material presented traditionally in the text. It affords the student the opportunity to utilize various strategies to develop and retain further knowledge in this complex area.

The authors provide an in- depth discussion of the foundations of ethics itself with an emphasis on the theoretical foundations of ethical issues. They then develop discussion through the structure of three pillars: "Healthcare Ethics Organizational Model"; "Organizations", and "Individuals and Society". This structure brings focus to the critical areas that impact health care ethics. It allows the student to develop a foundation of knowledge to build upon as the study progresses.

The editors have selected chapter authors, each with specific knowledge and expertise, to enhance the text and coincide with their theme.

Part I: "Theory of Healthcare Ethics"/*J. Summers*; The first chapter reviews, in a scholarly way, the various key theories that apply to ethics in healthcare situations. This foundation chapter can stand alone for the student who does not have a background in ethical study. It provides an in-depth but easily digested review of the main components of ethical thought through the ages including; *normative ethics*, *metaethics*, on through *ethical relativism; egoism; authority based ethical theories; virtue ethics...*and includes Kantian ethics. The author also includes discussion of more modern ethical theorists contrasting for example John Rawls with Robert Nozick. Also included is a discussion of Jeremy Benthem and John Stuart Mill.

In essence this chapter sets the stage for the ethical discussions that follow. It presents all the germane ethical theories that are used to discuss the components of "modern technologic healthcare."   The chapter concludes by discussing how key ethical theories are both important and critical to managers and providers in healthcare entities.

"People in the policy–making arena can enhance their evaluation of the behavior or motivations of various stakeholders if they determine the ethical system are likely to be using."[1]

The second chapter discusses the principles of healthcare ethics within these contexts. The entire first part creates a foundation for the chapters and discussions that follow.

Part II- Critical Issues for Individuals: This category is divided into ten chapters each discussing individual, timely, personal and controversial topics. The topics reflect various questions an individual might ask of themselves.

Chapters 3-6 discuss the ethical dilemmas associated with human reproduction; cloning; prenatal care; and abortion. The fact that our life expectancy is increasing significantly presents many new ethical issues as well. Chapters 7 and 8 discuss life expectancy and the issues which surround end of life as well as long term care etc. Chapter 9 addresses assisted living.

The next three chapters concern emerging life sustaining procedures and the problems associated with decision making at the end of life. New technology-created problems are some of the most difficult to weigh for healthcare professionals. Topics such as artificial nutrition and hydration; when to institute and (more importantly) when and how we withdraw are thoroughly investigated.

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[1] Morrison,E. Furlong,B. Health Care Ethics ;Critical issues for the 21st century, p. 35

This second section of the text creates new thinking paradigms for the professional and healthcare student alike. In each of the chapters and sections, provocative questions are posed. These questions can be used as teaching tools in almost any pedagogical setting.

Part III: "Critical issues for Healthcare Organizations"(multiple authors): This section, encompassing five chapters, provides discussion for healthcare organizations. The first chapter discusses and contrasts the concept that healthcare institutional ethics takes a broad approach compared with clinical ethics, and is potentially more far reaching in its impact.

Further discussion brings focus to hospital ethics committees, emergency departments, newer technologic advances and the potential benefit and nightmares they portend, and finally the role that spirituality plays within organizations and healthcare in general.

Part IV; "Critical Issues for Society's Health" (multiple authors): The final chapter provides a more ethereal discussion of the topics of the day including health inequalities and rationing. There is even a chapter which discusses the ethics of treating and dealing with domestic violence.

The most significant portion of the text is left to the last few chapters. These sections discuss the issues that are likely to emerge by passage of the Affordable Care Act. Discussed are healthcare reform and the problems posed by those who might be "left behind" as well as the potential future of our healthcare system.

The text is comprehensive. The authors avoid taking specific ethical positions leaving it to the reader and instructor to develop dialogue regarding the issues discussed and presented.

While less suitable as a primary text in a typical course, it clearly it would be an essential and useful resource in any healthcare ethics course of study. Most importantly, it can serve as a lynchpin text in graduate study. It is extremely well written and researched; this text, in my opinion belongs in the library of anyone teaching or discussing healthcare ethics.