

Ethics, Language, Misunderstandings, and Confusion

Advancement Resources proposes the following theory for your consideration.

In almost every situation, it is unethical for a physician or other health professional during a clinical visit to engage in a deep discussion of a particular philanthropic opportunity with a patient or family member, or to ask for a contribution during that clinical visit.

We believe a deep discussion of a particular philanthropic opportunity or making an “ask” during a clinical visit may be unethical because:

- The patient or family member may be vulnerable or may feel vulnerable.
- The patient or family member may believe that whether or not he/she agrees to contribute may have an impact on the quality of care he/she receives.
- The patient may not be in the best position to determine which contribution will provide the largest impact he/she would like to make.
- The physician or other health professional can become distracted from the primary focus, which must be the best health care for the patient.

A possible exception is when a patient and/or family member is assertive in broaching the topic of providing philanthropic support and who insists upon having a discussion during a clinical visit.



CORE CONCEPT

The best strategy to avoid ethical lapses—and to protect the sanctity of the physician/patient relationship—is to make referrals to development professionals.
