



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2001 Volume I: Medicine, Ethics, and Law

How Right are Patients' Rights?

Guide for Curriculum Unit 01.01.01
by Carolyn E. Fiorillo

The goal of this unit is to encourage students to think and to focus that thinking on the future of their health and that of their loved ones. It outlines the existing health care system—Medicaid, Medicare and HMO's—and its inherent shortcomings, the high price of prescription medications, the shortage of organ transplants for African Americans, the pros and cons of universal health coverage, the deterioration of the doctor/patient relationship, and the special health concerns of seniors, teenagers and women. Students are familiarized with their rights as patients and also the responsibility they have for their own health. There is an emphasis throughout the unit on ethical issues and questions raised as to what improvements could/should be made in our health care system to ensure that each individual receives the best treatment possible.

There is an ongoing activity which involves the students' recording their opinions and feelings in a journal every day, as they are taught the unit and also as they receive individualized cards outlining symptoms of their own supposed illnesses/injuries. This is meant to personalize the information they are assimilating and to help them experience the problems, emotions and decision-making involved, assisting them in examining their own value systems.

(Recommended for Health, Biology, and Ethics, grades 9-12.)

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