

Decree on the National Advisory Board on Health Care Ethics

Issued on 26 June 1998

Section 1

The Advisory Board

There shall be a National Advisory Board on Health Care Ethics at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

Section 2

Duties

In addition to the duties prescribed in section 2 a (1) of the Act on the Status and Rights of Patients (785/1992) the Advisory Board shall:

- 1) take initiatives and issue statements and recommendations on ethical issues in health care, including issues relating to nursing ethics, as well as to give rise to a societal discussion concerning these issues;
- 2) to render expert assistance in developing health care and related legislation;
- 3) to collect and convey information about ethical issues in health care and about international ethical discussion on health care, e.g. by means of various publications;
- 4) to monitor the development of health care and related technologies from an ethical point of view;
- 5) to carry out any other tasks designated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health related to ethical issues in health care.

Section 3

Composition

The Advisory Board shall consist of a chairperson, a vice chairperson, and a maximum of 18 other members. Each of the last-mentioned members shall have a personal deputy. The Council of State appoints the chairperson, the vice chairperson and the other members for four years at a time.

The members shall be familiar with ethical issues in health care. They shall represent the viewpoint of at least service users and providers, health care professionals, jurisprudence, health science and ethical research concerning man and society. At least four of the Advisory Board's members shall be appointed from among the Members of Parliament.

If the chairperson, vice chairperson or other member or deputy member of the Advisory Board should resign or die during his or her term of office, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health shall appoint a representative for him or her for the remainder of the term.

The Advisory Board has a secretary-general appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

The Advisory Board may call in permanent or temporary experts.

Section 4 *Sub-Committee on Medical Research Ethics*

The Advisory Board shall have a Sub-Committee on Medical Research Ethics appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The Sub-Committee shall:

- 1) support the regional ethics committees in fundamental ethical issues concerning medical and other health care research and assist in arranging training concerning them;
- 2) after having heard the relevant regional ethics committees, issue the national opinion concerning ethical issues in medical research required when carrying out international multi-centre research, if the Sub-Committee has not commissioned a regional ethics committee to do that.

The provisions of section 5 (2) and (3) shall otherwise apply to the Sub-Committee on Medical Research Ethics.

Section 5 *Sub-committees*

If necessary, the Advisory Board may establish other sub-committees.

The chairperson and the vice chairperson of a sub-committee shall be appointed by the Advisory Board from among its members.

A sub-committee may also have members who are not members of the Advisory Board.

Section 6 *Application of committee regulations*

The regulations on State committees shall otherwise apply to the Advisory Board.

Section 7 *More detailed regulations*

More detailed regulations on the application of this Decree will be issued as necessary by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

Section 8 *Entry into force*

This Decree enters into force on 1 September 1998.

Measures necessary for the implementation of this Decree may be undertaken before its entry into force.