



HEALTH ETHICS SEMINAR

2025-
2026
SERIES

Violence Against Healthcare Providers: An Elephant in the Room



Andrew D. Ross, PhD, HEC-C
Clinical Ethicist,
Clinical Ethics Service, Health Shared Services;
Clinical Lecturer,
John Dossetor Health Ethics Centre

Thursday, 26 February 2026

12:00 - 13:00 MST

ONLINE via Zoom application

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Violence and aggression towards healthcare providers (HCPs) in the workplace are sadly persistent problems. Ethics contributions in this area often emphasize the duty of care, the importance of compassion, and the need to protect HCPs so that they can continue to provide care. I will argue that this is at least partly because the *theoretically* interesting problem is that even violent patients are owed a duty of care. In this session, I will instead focus on something much less theoretically interesting – and indeed uncontroversial – which is the claim that HCPs are persons. It follows from this claim that harms to HCPs from workplace violence are moral wrongs, and not only because of the instrumental value of HCPs as workers, but because they have inherent value as persons. However, I will argue that our actions and attitudes in practice do not always align with this basic and uncontroversial position.

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