

Moral perspectives

Medical rights demand respect



By
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The right of an individual to refuse treatment from the medical and mental health professions is a critical freedom. It is an individual right, however, which is fast being eroded by the medical professions and by the commonly held views of our society.

The way in which persons usually lose their individual rights to accept or to refuse a particular medical or mental treatment is by giving up these rights when they enter a hospital.

In most hospitals, unless you insist that you know what drugs, tests and treatments you are being given, what is done to you is shrouded in secrecy.

In my profession I often see patients in hospitals who are unclear about what is being given to them and what is being done to their body.

NOT ONLY DO medical staff and hospital staff often not tell patients what the drugs are or what the effects will be, but patients are not informed that they have any decision in what is done or the right to question or refuse treatment.

A medical intervention into a person's life and body is morally justified not because a patient must have this done in order to recover health but because a patient gives permission for this to be done.

A person with cancer has the moral right to decide whether surgery is what he is willing to have done to his body.

It is as morally wrong for a doctor, a psychiatrist or a therapist to force someone to accept treatment as it is immoral for a perfectly healthy person to be hospitalized or have a perfectly healthy organ removed in surgery.

WE HAVE evidence that medical and mental hospitals in the Soviet Union are used for political and social ends. A young Russian gave me a subtle example.

Membership lunch planned by NCJW

The paid-up membership meeting of the Greater Detroit Section, National Council of Jewish Women, will begin at noon Monday, Sept. 9, at Temple Beth El.

Featured will be Phil Marcus Esser, Mary Ann Paquette and Charles Latimer performing excerpts from "Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris."

They will present a sneak preview of their new fall production. A petite luncheon will be served. Program chairpersons are Ann Moss of Southfield and Barbara Kuhl of Bloomfield Hills.

War Dead Memorial unveiled by club

The United Jewish Social Club will unveil a stone in memory of Jews who died during World War II at 1 p.m. Sunday at the Hebrew Memorial Cemetery, Fourteen Mile Road and Gratiot in Mt. Clemens.

President Michael Weiss said the entire Jewish community may attend.

Officiating will be Rabbi Herman Deutsch, Rabbi Leo Goldman, Cantor A. A. Rosenfield, Cantor Mendel Klein and Cantor Joseph Bernholtz.

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Abortion is provided free of charge in a Moscow hospital, but the procedure is carried out without anesthetic "to discourage repetition of this condition."

In our society it is less costly and more efficient to avoid having to deal with the client's and patient's decision about their own treatment.

It is not only the professionals who avoid dealing with the patient's right to accept or refuse treatment. In our society people now commonly assume that a person must be hospitalized and treated whether they permit it or not.

I say that a person has the moral right to decide to be treated or to refuse treatment both inside or outside of a hospital.

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