

## Information Ethics

Washington State University, fall 2008

Assignments due for: **Oct. 16, 2008**

<http://wsuinformationethics.blogspot.com/>

Assignments:

[ ] Contact your primary care physician (by phone or e-mail) and ask the following three questions:

Prompt: Hi, XXXX. ... I've been reading about issues in the medical field, and I'm curious about a couple of things. Can I ask you a few quick questions about the ways in which my care is handled and the ways in which you deal with potential or perceived conflicts of interest? (*Or phrase it something like that.*)

1. What did you do the last time your company rejected your recommendation for a patient's care? Please be as specific as possible.

2. Have you ever received gifts of any value, or done any consulting, for any pharmaceutical company? If so, how did you handle the potential conflict of interest? If not, how have you avoided that?

3. What's the biggest ethical challenge of your job right now?

This is a **deadline** assignment, **worth 25 points**. So you need to give your doctor enough time to respond. I highly suggest contacting that person on Friday, Oct. 10, and, if you don't hear back right away, calling, not emailing, again on Monday, Oct. 13.

If your primary care physician is out of town and can't be reached, then substitute the person you would be seeing instead. If you get really desperate, ask if the doctor on duty can spare a few minutes to answer some non-life-threatening questions. If you can't get a response from your primary care physician within six days, then maybe you should look for another one. But that won't excuse you from the deadline.

I'll leave it up to you if you want to state from the start that this is a class project. Of course, you should never hide this fact, if you are asked. But, also, you have the right to (and should) ask your doctor these types of questions anyway, without having to justify the inquiry.

Your completed assignment should be 1-2 printed pages (edit to length, if needed) and include:

- Your name
- The full name of the doctor you interviewed, the hospital/clinic and that person's direct contact information.
- The time, date and medium (email? phone?) of the interview.
- The questions and answers in an easily readable format.
- A summary of what you learned from completing this assignment, including any insights gained about your doctor.

[ ] **Submit article abstract to Fairness.com** – Abstract submission (**5 points**). **ALSO**, please post what your abstract was about on the Google group, with a sentence or two about why you picked it and what interested you about it. That way we all can keep up on the interesting ideas circulating in the news and what is intriguing our classmates.

Readings:

- Opposing Viewpoints on Ethics, "What Motivates People to Behave Ethically," Intro and Viewpoints 1-3.