

**Healthcare Ethics Committee (HCEC) of NBC**  
**Meeting (#2), Tuesday, March 12, 2013, 9.45 am to 11.15 am**

**Venue:** CBEC-SIUT, Karachi

**Present:** Drs. Haroon Ahmed (HA), Aasim Ahmed (AA), Farid Khan (FK), Aamir Jafarey (AJ), Mr. Shaukat Jawaid (SJ), and Farhat Moazam (FM)

**Absent** (unable to contact): Feroze Din Memon (FDM)

**Minutes** (by FM)

**1. Review of previous minutes and matters arising:**

The minutes were approved without any amendment.

Unanimous approval of the TOR for HCEC was confirmed.

As requested, the NBC Secretariat has added a link for the HCEC on the NBC website providing a list of members and the TOR of the committee. Dr. Huma Qureshi (HQ) has also responded to other requests for information and these are discussed under the next agenda item.

Tasks assigned to HCEC members have been completed.

**2. Review of information provided by HQ (related to first HCEC meeting):**

a) FM expressed her appreciation for prompt responses to her emails by HQ and the NBC Secretariat. Each response was then reviewed and discussed by members.

b) Members present agreed with the suggestion that change of the committee name from the narrow MEC to the more inclusive HCEC should be ratified in the next NBC meeting. As yet there has been no intimation about when this meeting will take place.

**\*\* Task: NBC Secretariat is requested to add this as agenda item for the next NBC meeting.**

c) HQ had written a letter on Feb. 27, 2013 to Dr. Feroze Din Memon, DG Health Sindh (who has neither responded to emails nor attended any meeting so far), requesting a “more proactive role” as member of HCEC. So far there has been no response from him to this either.

**\*\* Task: FM will try and obtain Dr. Din's telephone number from HQ and attempt to contact him again.**

d) After HCEC member Nadeem Akbar's dismissal from PMDC the committee has been left with no representative. On Feb. 27 HQ had written a letter (copied to FM) addressed to "Administrator" of PMDC requesting that she be informed of Dr. Akbar's replacement. She had also pointed out that in the NBC meeting of Dec. 24, 2012, chaired by Additional Secretary, Cabinet Division, the President of PMDC was also nominated as member of the newly constituted committee for healthcare ethics. There has been no response so far to this letter either.

HCEC members discussed the necessity of having a PMDC representative on the committee as PMDC collaboration will be essential for implementation of the undergraduate ethics curriculum that is being developed. It was noted that PMDC elections are due in another 2 months adding to the uncertainty of who would be the next President and office bearers. Nevertheless, the consensus was to make another attempt to contact PMDC.

**\*\* Task: FM will write a letter directly to Dr. Sibte Hassan, current PMDC President, attach HQ's letter with it, and request a member for HCEC. SJ knows Dr. Hassan personally and will contact him subsequently to ensure that the letter has been brought to his attention.**

e) According to HQ, there have been no responses to Cabinet Division's letters written to provincial secretaries requesting information about Provincial Bioethics Committees. HCEC members expressed their frustration at the continuing lack of support/attention/follow through by relevant government officials and departments in matters related to NBC activities.

f) Neither FM nor HCEC members know who are the current Provincial Director Generals of Health Services. Therefore HQ's suggestion that FM, as chair of HCEC, contact these individuals directly to provide provincial "focal persons" to collaborate with the committee seems impractical. Members believe that this should be the responsibility of the Secretariat as HCEC is a subcommittee of NBC.

**\*\* Task: It is requested that NBC Secretariat take necessary steps to obtain names of individuals from the Provinces who will collaborate with HCEC.**

### **3. Discussion on Ethics Curriculum for medical and dental students:**

A major part of the meeting was spent in discussing the working paper, developed by AJ and FM, providing a template of ethical topics for inclusion in an undergraduate curriculum in light of PMDC Code of Ethics that recommends this topic be taught to medical and dental students.

Each of the seven broad themes, ranging from general to specific, was discussed and additions and modifications suggested based on expertise of members. A consensus was reached on the following –

- i) The document (final length to be determined) will consist of broad recommendations to help public and private medical and dental colleges in designing a basic ethics curriculum for introducing bioethics to students.
- ii) It will include general goals, list and define broad areas pertaining to ethical practice of medicine/dentistry, identify relevant professional codes and laws, suggest teaching methodologies, and list pertinent reading materials as needed.
- iii) The document will recommend the core knowledge of bioethics which students must possess at the time of graduation. The form and time over which this will be imparted may differ from one institution to the next based on available time and resources.

Difficulties foreseen -

- i) Implementation of the recommendations is unlikely unless PMDC is on board as stakeholder and makes ethics education mandatory in teaching institutions. Therefore the lack of a PMDC representative in HCEC remains a major problem.
- ii) The question about who will teach bioethics was also discussed. Although there are now over 100 professionals in Pakistan with either a Postgraduate Diploma or Masters in bioethics, most are located in Karachi (or other major cities) and only a few are in teaching institutions.

**\*\* Tasks:**

**a) AJ will modify the working paper based on suggestions given by members and re-circulate this by March 15, 2013.**

**b) In the subsequent weeks, HCEC members will develop the topics assigned to each, and email these to FM no later than May 1, 2013.**

**4. AOB:**

In the past, NBC has organized and conducted research ethics workshops in Pakistan with the aim of “training trainers.” Members discussed and agreed that in the future these workshops should include sessions focusing on ethics related to healthcare practices. Such combined workshops would be logistically simple, and will avoid duplication of effort and resources.

**\*\* Task: The Secretariat is requested that future NBC research ethics workshops include sessions on healthcare related ethics.**

**5. Next HCEC meeting:**

The next committee meeting will be held in **CBEC on Tuesday, May 21, from 9.00 am to 10.30 am**. An agenda will be circulated two weeks prior to the meeting.