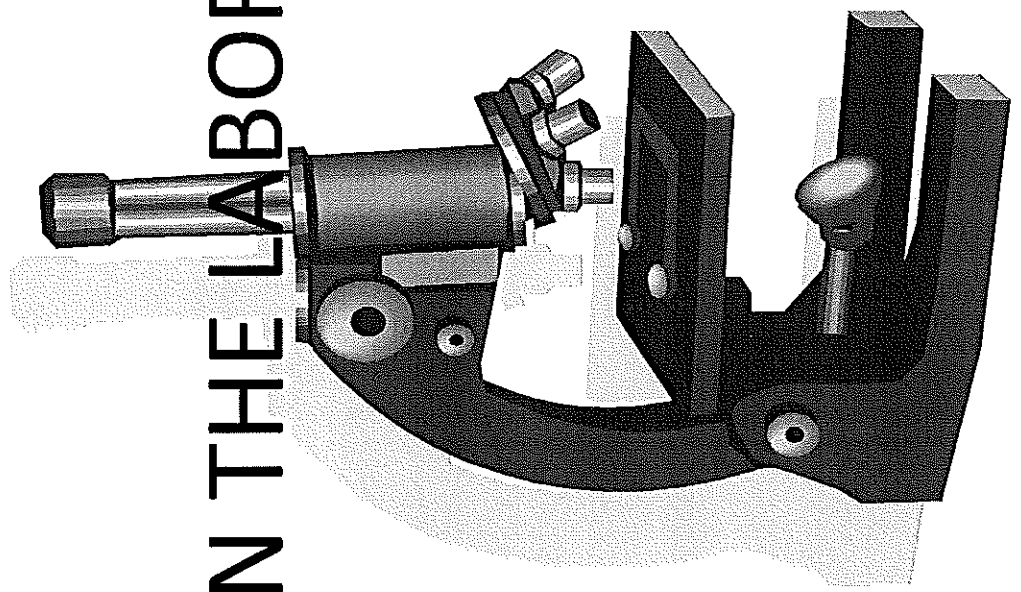


# ETHICS IN THE LABORATORY



- The professional personnel of a medical laboratory are bound by the ethical codes of their respective Colleges. (CMLTO, CPSO etc.)
- Many of the components of the professional Code of Ethics provide a moral framework and are applicable to other laboratory staff including managers, MLAs, Clerical and other Support Staff.
- Most ethical issues are resolved by referring to or developing policies and procedures. Some issues/resolutions are not so clear cut and may be influenced by personal opinion, religious or cultural beliefs.

***ETHICS in the Laboratory relates to topics such as:***

- Consent
- Respect for patient privacy
- Approved Laboratory procedures
- Confidentiality
- Record management
- Conflict of Interest
- Standards of Practice
- Respectful working relationships with each other and other health care providers
- Compliance with laws and regulations

**Policies and Procedures and Codes of Practice are in place to deal with these issues.**

***ETHICS in the Laboratory can also relate to:***

- Handling of specimens, fetal and other human remains.
- Questionable practices such as bloodwork being ordered on near death patients, or excessive ordering of tests on patients.
- Collecting blood on a family member or close friend.
- Transfusing Rh pos blood to an Rh neg patient.  
( to name a few)

Policies and Procedures and Codes of Ethics may or may not assist with resolving these types of issues.

## **What to do if you have a question or concern?**

1. Take the *'Ethical Action Test'*  
↓
2. Talk to your manager  
↓
3. Refer to the organization *'Ethics Framework'*  
↓
4. Consult with available experts on Ethics.

# The Ethical Action Test

Check your decisions or planned activities for ‘rightness’ before implementing them.

Answering ‘NO’ to any of the following questions would suggest the need for an alternate approach.

1. *Talk to your manager*
2. *Refer to the organization ‘Ethics Framework’*
3. *Consult with available experts on Ethics.*

## ***Ethical Action Test***

1. Is it legal?
2. Does it comply with our polices, rules and/or guidelines?
3. Is it in-sync with organizational values?  
(Compassion, Respect, Accountability, Quality etc.)
4. Will I be comfortable and guilt-free if I do it?
5. Would I do it to my family or friends
6. Would I be perfectly OK with someone doing it to me?
7. Would the most ethical person I know do it?

# Ethics Resources

- WRH Ethics Program *IDEA* Framework
- LDMH – Ethics Resource Manual
- IHL-OPS-I Ethics in the Laboratory
- Management Team