

Facing difficult decisions, pandemic has doctors asking ‘What did I sign up for?’

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought new, and difficult, challenges for the medical community – so much so that some clinicians can reach a point where they question their own values.

“The topic that has been percolating throughout COVID is the moral distress, that has really come to the forefront” said Dr. Eleanor Stewart, one of two Covenant Health clinical ethicists. “The person is left with a feeling that they have violated their own values or the values they hold dearly.”

Finding a balance between the individual good and the collective good – for example, decisions regarding a family’s access to loved ones and the restrictions to mitigate the spread of the virus – is not easy.

As Canada celebrates National Catholic Health Care Week Oct. 4-10, Grandin Media interviewed Dr. Stewart, and Dr. Gordon Self, chief mission and ethics officer with Covenant Health. It’s a companion interview to a COVID-19 panel discussion on the inherent dignity of every human life.

In this wide-ranging, hour-long interview, Dr. Self and Dr. Stewart reflect on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges it raises.

Woven throughout is the mission of Covenant Health: To continue the healing ministry of Jesus by serving with compassion, upholding the sacredness of life in all stages, and caring for the whole person—body, mind and soul.