

# When Religion and Children's Health Care Collide: Ethics and Options

Who makes health decisions for children?



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Paul D. Coverdell Center, Room 175  
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Refreshments to follow.

**Abstract:** Recent cases in Canada illustrate what can happen when religious beliefs, the Hippocratic Oath, and secular law intersect regarding health issues involving minors. In one case, the court mandated that a dying child be given blood despite her own and her mother's objections on religious grounds. In another case, Roman Catholic authorities blocked delivery of publicly-funded HPV immunization to girls enrolled in a publicly supported Catholic school system thereby potentially increasing their cervical cancer risk. Legal scholar Juliet Guichon explores these cases in which sexism and the reluctance to criticize religion operate to the detriment of children, and addresses possible policy solutions.

**Bio:** Dr. Juliet Guichon is a medical bioethicist in the faculty of medicine at the University of Calgary, Canada. She has academic degrees reflecting broad interests: B.A. in history (Yale University), two degrees in law and a master of arts in law from Oxford University (B.A., B.C.L., M.A.). After being called to the Bar of Ontario and working in a law firm, she studied at the University of Toronto where she received a doctorate degree on the ethics of assisted human reproduction (S.J.D.). Her primary area of research is human vulnerability at the intersection of law, health care, ethics, religion and journalism.

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