UNIT TERMINAL OBJECTIVE
1-5 At the completion of this unit, the paramedic student will understand the role that ethics plays in decision making in the out-of-hospital environment.

COGNITIVE OBJECTIVES
At the completion of this unit, the paramedic student will be able to:

1-5.1 Define ethics. (C-1)
1-5.2 Distinguish between ethical and moral decisions. (C-3)
1-5.3 Identify the premise that should underlie the paramedic's ethical decisions in out-of-hospital care. (C-1)
1-5.4 Analyze the relationship between the law and ethics in EMS. (C-3)
1-5.5 Compare and contrast the criteria that may be used in allocating scarce EMS resources. (C-3)
1-5.6 Identify the issues surrounding the use of advance directives, in making a prehospital resuscitation decision. (C-1)
1-5.7 Describe the criteria necessary to honor an advance directive in your state. (C-1)

AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVES
At the completion of this unit, the paramedic student will be able to:

1-5.8 Value the patient's autonomy in the decision-making process. (A-2)
1-5.9 Defend the following ethical positions: (A-3)
   a. The paramedic is accountable to the patient.
   b. The paramedic is accountable to the medical director.
   c. The paramedic is accountable to the EMS system.
   d. The paramedic is accountable for fulfilling the standard of care.
1-5.10 Given a scenario, defend or challenge a paramedic's actions concerning a patient who is treated against his/her wishes. (A-3)
1-5.11 Given a scenario, defend a paramedic's actions in a situation where a physician orders therapy the paramedic feels to be detrimental to the patient's best interests. (A-3)

PSYCHOMOTOR OBJECTIVES
None identified for this unit.
DECLARATIVE

I. Introduction
   A. Ethical dilemmas are present in out-of-hospital care
   B. Ethical dilemma today may be decided by law tomorrow

II. Ethics overview
   A. Ethics defined
      1. Socrates: “How should one live?”
      2. Larger issue than paramedic practice
      3. Morals relate to social standards
      4. Ethics relate to personal standards
   B. Answering ethical questions
      1. Emotion should not be a factor
      2. The question should be answered with reason
      3. Answer must not be based on what people think is wrong or right
         a) The individual must answer the question for him/her self
      4. Never do what is morally wrong
   C. The need for an out-of-hospital ethical code
   D. How ethics impact individual practice
      1. A personal code
      2. The importance of reflecting on one’s own practice.
         a) “An unexamined life is not worth living”
   E. How ethics impact institutional practice

III. Ethical tests in healthcare
   A. Fundamental question
      1. What is in the patient’s best interest?
      2. Determining what the patient wants
         a) Patient statement
         b) Written statement
         c) Family input
      3. The role of “good faith” in making ethical decisions
   B. Global concepts
      1. Provide patient benefit
      2. Avoid harm
      3. Recognize patient autonomy
   C. Resolving ethical dilemmas when global concepts are in conflict
      1. Within healthcare community
         a) Establishment of norms (standards of care)
         b) Research and treatment protocols
         c) Prospective and retrospective reviews of decisions
      2. Within the public
         a) Creation of laws protecting patient rights
         b) Use of advance directives, etc. to make patient wishes known

IV. Ethical issues in contemporary paramedic practice
   A. Allocation of resources
      1. True parity
      2. Need
3. Earned

B. Decisions surrounding resuscitation
   1. What the patient really wants
   2. When in doubt, resuscitate
   3. Resuscitation after an advance directive is found

C. Confidentiality
   1. A fundamental right
   2. Ethics and confidential information
      a) Legally required
         (1) Does this supersede ethical considerations?
         (2) What if the public health would benefit?

D. Consent
   1. Patient right to make decisions regarding health care
      a) “Fundamental element of the patient-physician relationship”
      b) AMA code of medical ethics
   2. Ethics of implied consent
      a) Does the patient understand the issues at hand?
      b) Can the patient make an informed decision in his/ her best interest

E. Applications of ethical principles to patient care situations
   1. Care in futile situations
      a) Defining futile
      b) Who makes the decision?
   2. Obligation to provide care
      a) Good Samaritan
      b) Inability to pay
      c) Isn’t in the “health plan”
      d) Patient “dumping”
      e) Economic triage
   3. Advocacy
   4. Paramedic accountability
      a) Patient
      b) Physician medical director
      c) System/ HMO protocols
   5. Role as physician extender
      a) The physician orders something which
         (1) The paramedic believes is contraindicated
         (2) The paramedic believes is medically acceptable but not in the patient’s best interests
         (3) The paramedic believes is medically acceptable but morally wrong