CASE STUDY

Eileen and Dan are 75 and 79, respectively. Eileen is a retired school teacher, and Dan is a retired mechanical engineer. They live in a three-level row home in Baltimore City, where they raised their three children, who are now in their 50s. Diana, the oldest daughter, is married to Frank; they live in Baltimore County with their 16 year old son. Diana has taken on the caregiving role for her parents over the past several years. Brian and his wife Theresa, who have three adult children, live in California. Steve, who lives in Western Maryland, has no children. Dan has been a heavy smoker for the past 40 years and was diagnosed several years ago with diabetes, high blood pressure, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. As a result, he has breathing issues after any physical activity. Eileen has been fully involved in helping maintain the household by doing the cooking, shopping, chores, etc. Diana begins to discuss, with her brothers, concerns about their mom’s ability to maintain the household. Eileen, who has a history of chronic pain, has taken Tramadol as needed for the past 15 years. She seems to have more difficulty making decisions lately and appears anxious. Diana notices a change in housekeeping patterns, for example, growing clutter in the hallways.

Throughout the conference, new details will be added to this evolving case to explore how various health care disciplines and religious traditions address the ethical conflicts presented.