Cardio.: 2

You are shadowing two 2nd year residents in the emergency room. A 48 year old female is brought in by ambulance. The patient presented as approaching morbid obesity. She was conscious, alert and appears oriented times 3. Her dress and breath smells of tobacco smoke.

The patient admitted to back pain shortness of breath and feeling weak. She has been given nitro in route and is on a re-breather for O2. She is given an EKG (ECG) which provides results that are suspicious but not conclusive. Standard procedures are followed and appropriate additional tests are ordered. The patient was given applicable medication in an effort to limit possible damage to the heart and to stabilize her since the residences are convinced that she is very likely having a MI.

The patient is told that she will be going to the Intensive Cardiac Care Unit and will likely be hospitalized for a time if the tests confirm a MI (heart attack). The patient tells the residents that she is not having a heart attack and that there is no need for hospitalization. She reports that she was kissed between her breasts and on her lower back by the devil as punishment for not doing her dishes right after breakfast this morning. She added that all she needs is for a priest to come in and bless her. After that she said she would be fine and could go home to her three cats. She then says that if the hospital will not send for a priest that she will go to her church herself. She says she does not want to stay and again states that she is not sick but cursed.

Identify the ethics issue(s). How would you suggest the medical proceed?