Civil War Hospital

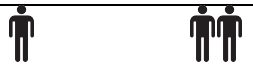
The year is 1864, and you are a nurse at the Armory Square Hospital in Washington, D.C. Every day, you give medicine, clean wounds, and feed your patients. You wash their bedding, help them write letters, and provide emotional support. You are always busy, and after working here for two years, you are also very tired.

This morning, your routine was interrupted by a loud groan from across the room. The groaning patient is a young man named Henry who had his arm amputated at a field hospital in Virginia. It looks like Henry is developing an infection in his wound, which can cause incredible pain. You also know that 50% of the patients who develop infections in the hospital will die. It's part of the heart-breaking reality of your job.

Until recently, doctors and nurses have not had any effective medicines to fight against infections. Luckily, there is a new medicine called bromine that has increased the odds of survival. If bromine is given before an infection develops; there is a 90% chance the patient will survive. If it is given after an infection develops, there is a 60% chance the patient will survive.

The good news is that you have some bromine at your hospital; the bad news is that you only have enough for three patients, and last night, three young men arrived with wounds that require surgery today. Equipped with three doses of bromine, you must choose between two options:

Option 1: Give the bromine to Henry, and hope that it heals his infection. You will give the remaining doses to two of the three patients who are having surgery this morning. One patient who is currently wounded, but not infected, will have a greater risk of developing an infection because he will not receive bromine after his surgery.

Will receive bromine	Will not receive bromine
 Henry (60% survival rate) new patients (90% survival rate)	 new patient

Option 2: Do not give it to Henry. You will give the bromine to the three new patients who are wounded, but have not yet developed infections. Bromine is known to be most effective at preventing infections.

Will receive bromine	Will not receive bromine
 new patients (90% survival rate)	 Henry

Civil War Hospital Response

You have three doses of bromine, and four patients.
Who will receive the medicine?

Write your response to the dilemma in the space below.
What will you do? Why will you do it?