

## WMA INTERNATIONAL CODE OF MEDICAL ETHICS

Adopted by the 3<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of the World Medical Association,  
London, England, October 1949  
and amended by the 22<sup>nd</sup> World Medical Assembly, Sydney, Australia, August 1968  
and the 35<sup>th</sup> World Medical Assembly, Venice, Italy, October 1983  
and the 57<sup>th</sup> WMA General Assembly, Pilanesberg, South Africa, October 2006

### DUTIES OF PHYSICIANS IN GENERAL

A PHYSICIAN SHALL always exercise his/her independent professional judgment and maintain the highest standards of professional conduct.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL respect a competent patient's right to accept or refuse treatment.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL not allow his/her judgment to be influenced by personal profit or unfair discrimination.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL be dedicated to providing competent medical service in full professional and moral independence, with compassion and respect for human dignity.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL deal honestly with patients and colleagues, and report to the appropriate authorities those physicians who practice unethically or incompetently or who engage in fraud or deception.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL not receive any financial benefits or other incentives solely for referring patients or prescribing specific products.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL respect the rights and preferences of patients, colleagues, and other health professionals.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL recognize his/her important role in educating the public but should use due caution in divulging discoveries or new techniques or treatment through non-professional channels.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL certify only that which he/she has personally verified.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL strive to use health care resources in the best way to benefit patients and their community.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL seek appropriate care and attention if he/she suffers from mental or physical illness.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL respect the local and national codes of ethics.

### **DUTIES OF PHYSICIANS TO PATIENTS**

A PHYSICIAN SHALL always bear in mind the obligation to respect human life.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL act in the patient's best interest when providing medical care.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL owe his/her patients complete loyalty and all the scientific resources available to him/her. Whenever an examination or treatment is beyond the physician's capacity, he/she should consult with or refer to another physician who has the necessary ability.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL respect a patient's right to confidentiality. It is ethical to disclose confidential information when the patient consents to it or when there is a real and imminent threat of harm to the patient or to others and this threat can be only removed by a breach of confidentiality.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL give emergency care as a humanitarian duty unless he/she is assured that others are willing and able to give such care.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL in situations when he/she is acting for a third party, ensure that the patient has full knowledge of that situation.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL not enter into a sexual relationship with his/her current patient or into any other abusive or exploitative relationship.

### **DUTIES OF PHYSICIANS TO COLLEAGUES**

A PHYSICIAN SHALL behave towards colleagues as he/she would have them behave towards him/her.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL NOT undermine the patient-physician relationship of colleagues in order to attract patients.

A PHYSICIAN SHALL when medically necessary, communicate with colleagues who are involved in the care of the same patient. This communication should respect patient confidentiality and be confined to necessary information.