Although physicians’ primary ethical obligation is to individual patients, they also have a responsibility to protect and promote public health.

Community health

Physicians have a long-recognized responsibility to participate in activities to protect and promote the health of the public. Physicians must balance dual responsibilities to promote the welfare and confidentiality of the individual patient and to protect public safety.

Code of Medical Ethics Opinions: Community health

- Routine universal screening for HIV: Opinion E-8.1
- Impaired drivers & their physicians: Opinion E-8.2
- Physicians’ responsibilities in disaster response & preparedness: Opinion E-8.3
- Ethical use of quarantine & isolation: Opinion E-8.4
- Disparities in health care: Opinion E-8.5
- Promoting patient safety: Opinion E-8.6
- Routine universal immunization of physicians: Opinion E-8.7
- Required reporting of adverse events: Opinion E-8.8
- Expedited partner therapy: Opinion E-8.9
- Preventing, identifying & treating violence and abuse: Opinion E-8.10
- Health promotion and preventive care: Opinion E-8.11
- Ethical physician conduct in the media: Opinion E-8.12

Code of Medical Ethics Opinions: Chapter 8 (PDF)

AMA Code of Medical Ethics

Visit the Code of Medical Ethics page to access additional Opinions, the Principles of Medical Ethics and a list of CME courses that are available.
These Opinions are offered as ethics guidance for physicians and are not intended to establish standards of clinical practice or rules of law.