Protecting information gathered in association with the care of the patient is a core value in health care.

Privacy

Patient privacy encompasses a number of aspects, including personal space (physical privacy), personal data (informational privacy), personal choices including cultural and religious affiliations (decisional privacy), and personal relationships with family members and other intimates (associational privacy).

Code of Medical Ethics opinions: privacy

- Privacy in Health Care: Opinion E-3.1.1
- Patient Privacy & Outside Observers to the Clinical Encounter: Opinion E-3.1.2
- Audio or Visual Recording of Patients for Education in Health Care: Opinion E-3.1.3
- Audio or Visual Recording of Patients for Public Education: Opinion E-3.1.4
- Professionalism in Relationships with Media: Opinion E-3.1.5

Confidentiality

Patients need to be able to trust that physicians will protect information shared in confidence.

Code of Medical Ethics opinions: confidentiality

- Confidentiality: Opinion E-3.2.1
- Confidentiality Post Mortem: Opinion E-3.2.2
- Industry-Employed Physicians & Independent Medical Examiners: Opinion E-3.2.3
- Access to Medical Records by Data Collection Companies: Opinion E-3.2.4
Medical records

Medical records serve important patient interests for present health care and future needs, as well as insurance, employment and other purposes.

Code of Medical Ethics opinions: medical records

- Management of Medical Records: Opinion E-3.3.1
- Confidentiality & Electronic Medical Records: Opinion E-3.3.2
- Breach of Security in Electronic Medical Records: Opinion E-3.3.3

Chapter 3: Opinions on privacy, confidentiality & medical records (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.