

## Code of Medical Ethics: Professional self-regulation

---

Society permits medicine to set standards of ethical and professional conduct for physicians. In return, medicine is expected to hold physicians accountable for meeting those standards and to address lapses in professional conduct when they occur.

### Sexual boundaries

Romantic or sexual interactions detract from the goals of the patient-physician relationship and may exploit the vulnerability of the patient, compromise the physician's ability to make objective judgments about the patient's health care and ultimately be detrimental to the patient's well-being.

Code of Medical Ethics opinions: sexual boundaries

- Romantic or Sexual Relationships with Patients: Opinion E-9.1.1
- Romantic or Sexual Relationships with Key Third Parties: Opinion E-9.1.2
- Sexual Harassment in the Practice of Medicine: Opinion E-9.1.3

### Physician education & training

As educators, physicians have a responsibility to instill the ethical precepts of medicine and to be fair and respectful to trainees as well as to patients.

Code of Medical Ethics opinions: physician education & training

- Medical Student Involvement in Patient Care: Opinion E-9.2.1
- Resident & Fellow Physicians' Involvement in Patient Care: Opinion E-9.2.2
- Performing Procedures on the Newly Deceased: Opinion E-9.2.3
- Disputes Between Medical Supervisors & Trainees: Opinion E-9.2.4
- Medical Students Practicing Clinical Skills on Fellow Students: Opinion E-9.2.5
- Continuing Medical Education: Opinion E-9.2.6
- Financial Relationships with Industry in Continuing Medical Education: Opinion E-9.2.7

## Physician wellness

Physicians have a responsibility to maintain their own health and wellness, broadly construed as preventing or treating acute or chronic diseases, including mental illness, disabilities, and occupational stress. When physician health or wellness is compromised, so may the safety and effectiveness of the medical care provided.

Code of Medical Ethics opinions: physician wellness

- | Physician Health & Wellness: Opinion E-9.3.1
- | Physician Responsibilities to Impaired Colleagues: Opinion E-9.3.2

## Peer review & disciplinary action

Peer review by medical societies, hospital credentials and utilization committees, or other bodies, has long been established by organized medicine to scrutinize professional conduct. The peer review process is intended to balance physicians' right to exercise medical judgment freely with the obligation to do so wisely and temperately.

Code of Medical Ethics opinions: peer review & disciplinary action

- | Peer Review & Due Process: Opinion E-9.4.1
- | Reporting Incompetent or Unethical Behavior by Colleagues: Opinion E-9.4.2
- | Discipline & Medicine: Opinion E-9.4.3
- | Physicians with Disruptive Behavior: Opinion E-9.4.4

## Physician involvement in health care institutions

Physicians have a responsibility to promote patient safety, quality of care and respectful professional relationships as individuals and through the organized medical staff of health care facilities.

Code of Medical Ethics opinions: physician involvement in health care institutions

- Organized Medical Staff: Opinion E-9.5.1
- Staff Privileges: Opinion E-9.5.2
- Accreditation: Opinion E-9.5.3
- Civil Rights & Medical Professionals: Opinion E-9.5.4
- Gender Discrimination in Medicine: Opinion E-9.5.5

## Physician promotion & marketing practices

As responsible businesspeople and professionals, physicians must communicate truthfully about their practices and take care that conflicts of interest do not undermine their professional conduct or compromise the trust of patients and the public.

Code of Medical Ethics opinions: physician promotion & marketing practices

- Advertising & Publicity: Opinion E-9.6.1
- Gifts to Physicians from Industry: Opinion E-9.6.2
- Incentives to Patients for Referrals: Opinion E-9.6.3
- Sale of Health-Related Products: Opinion E-9.6.4
- Sale of Non-Health-Related Goods: Opinion E-9.6.5
- Prescribing & Dispensing Drugs & Devices: Opinion E-9.6.6
- Direct-to-Consumer Advertisement of Prescription Drugs: Opinion E-9.6.7
- Direct-to-Consumer Diagnostic Imaging Tests: Opinion E-9.6.8
- Physician Self-Referral: Opinion E-9.6.9

## Physician interactions with government agencies

As citizens and as professionals with specialized knowledge and experience, physicians have civic duties, but medical ethics do not require a physician to carry out such duties when that would contradict fundamental principles of medical ethics.

Code of Medical Ethics opinions: physician interactions with government agencies

- Medical Testimony: Opinion E-9.7.1
- Court-Initiated Medical Treatment in Criminal Cases: Opinion E-9.7.2
- Capital Punishment: Opinion E-9.7.3
- Physician Participation in Interrogation: Opinion E-9.7.4
- Torture: Opinion E-9.7.5

## Chapter 9: Opinions on professional self-regulation (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.