Terminating a Patient-Physician Relationship

Code of Medical Ethics Opinion 1.1.5

Physicians’ fiduciary responsibility to patients entails an obligation to support continuity of care for their patients. At the beginning of patient-physician relationship, the physician should alert the patient to any foreseeable impediments to continuity of care.

When considering withdrawing from a case, physicians must:

1. Notify the patient (or authorized decision maker) long enough in advance to permit the patient to secure another physician.
2. Facilitate transfer of care when appropriate.

*AMA Principles of Medical Ethics: I, VI*

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Code of Medical Ethics: Patient-Physician Relationships

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