

REGULATION POLICY

Code of Ethics

October 2001

Preamble

This document deals with the ethics, rather than the laws, governing pharmacy practice. Laws and ethics of health care overlap considerably, since both share the concern that the conduct of health care professionals should reflect respect for the well being, dignity and self-determination of the public. At the same time, there are situations in which the two domains of law and ethics may remain distinct and this Code of Ethics, while prepared with awareness of the law is addressed to ethical obligations.

This Code of Ethics defines and seeks to clarify the obligations of the pharmacists to use their knowledge and skills for the benefit of others, to be fair and just in their service to the public, to minimize harm and to respect patient autonomy. It educates pharmacists about their ethical duties and obligations and serves as a tool for self-evaluation and peer review. The Code of Ethics advises the public of the values and moral commitments which pharmacy regulators expect of pharmacists.

Statement I

Pharmacists hold the health and safety of each patient to be of primary consideration.

Guidelines for interpretation

1. Pharmacists have specialized knowledge and skills about medications, health-related products, and medicinal and non-medicinal therapies and are expected to use these knowledge and skills to benefit their patients.
2. Pharmacists are aware of the scope of their knowledge and skills and refer patients to appropriate health care professionals when in the best interest of their patients.
3. Pharmacists supply medications and health related products that are safe, effective and of good quality.

Statement II:

Pharmacists form a professional relationship with each patient.

Guidelines for interpretation

1. Pharmacists respect the professional relationship with the patient and act with honesty, integrity and compassion.
2. Pharmacists determine the patient's needs, values and desired outcomes.
3. Pharmacists seek to involve their patients in decisions regarding their health.

Statement III:

Pharmacists honour the autonomy, values and dignity of each patient.

Guidelines for interpretation

1. Pharmacists provide their patients with information that is truthful, accurate and understandable so that the patients are able to make informed choices about their health care.
2. Pharmacists are committed to provide care which is sensitive to, but not prejudiced by race, religion, social or marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age or health.
3. Pharmacists respect the informed decisions of competent patients who choose to refuse treatment or services and live at risk.
4. Pharmacists respect the dignity of patients with diminished competence and seek to involve them, to an appropriate extent, in decisions regarding their health.

Statement IV:

Pharmacists respect and protect the patient's right of confidentiality.

Guidelines for interpretation

1. Pharmacists keep confidential all information acquired in the course of professional practice.
2. Confidential information is disclosed only in cases where the patient (or the patient's agent) provides consent, where the law demands or where disclosure will protect the patient or others from harm.

Statement V:

Pharmacists respect the rights of patients to receive pharmacy products and services and ensure these rights are met.

Guidelines for interpretation

1. Pharmacists who object, as a matter of conscience, to providing a particular pharmacy product or service must be prepared to explain the basis of their objections to pharmacy management, not the patient.
2. Pharmacists who object, as a matter of conscience, to providing a particular pharmacy product or service have a responsibility to participate in a system designed to respect a patient's right to receive pharmacy products and services.
The system must be pre-arranged to enable the patient to obtain the product or service in a timely and convenient manner, minimizing suffering to the patient.
3. Pharmacists have a duty, through communication and coordination, to ensure continuity of care of patients during pharmacy relocation or closure, job action, natural disasters or situations where continuity of care may be problematic.

Statement VI:

Pharmacists observe the law, preserve high professional standards and uphold the dignity and honour of the profession.

Guideline for interpretation

1. Pharmacists obey the laws, regulations, standards and policies of the profession, both in letter and in spirit.
2. Pharmacists do not condone breaches of the law, regulations, standards or policies by colleagues, co-workers or owners of a pharmacy and report, without fear, such breaches.

3. Pharmacists accept the ethical principles of the profession.
4. Pharmacists do not engage in any practice, the conditions of which might cause pharmacists to compromise the laws, regulations, standards and policies of the profession.
5. Pharmacists do not practice under conditions which compromise their freedom to exercise professional judgment or which cause a deterioration of the quality of their professional service or care.
6. Pharmacists do not enter into arrangements with prescribers that could affect the prescriber's independent professional judgement in prescribing or that could interfere with the patient's right of choice of a pharmacy.

Statement VII:

Pharmacists continually improve their levels of professional knowledge and skills.

Guideline for interpretation

1. Pharmacists assume the responsibility of continually evaluating and improving their professional competence to enhance their ability to provide patient care.

Statement VII:

Pharmacists cooperate with colleagues and other health care professionals so that maximum benefits to patient care can be realized.

Guidelines for interpretation

1. Pharmacists respect the values and abilities of colleagues and other health care professionals.
2. Keeping confidentiality in mind, pharmacists consult with colleagues or other health care professionals to benefit the patient. If appropriate, pharmacists refer their patients to other health care professionals or agencies.
3. Pharmacists maintain professional relationships with colleagues and ensure patients' needs are met when supplying colleagues with transfer copies of prescriptions, inventory, etc.

Statement IX:

Pharmacists contribute to the health care system and to societal health needs.

Guidelines for interpretation

1. Pharmacists support positive changes in the health care system by actively influencing and participating in health policy development, review and revision.
2. Pharmacists support cost-effective therapies.
3. Pharmacists support the prudent use of health care resources.
4. Pharmacists participate in programs to educate the public about health.
5. Pharmacists foster the advancement of knowledge by supporting appropriate research projects, whenever possible.
6. Pharmacists support environmental issues related to pharmacy by promoting the safe disposal of drugs and related products.
7. Pharmacists support the training and education of future pharmacists to ensure the public has continued access to pharmacy products and services.