

CODE OF ETHICS OF THE PHILIPPINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE 1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Section 1. The primary objective of the practice of medicine is service to mankind irrespective of race, age, disease, disability, gender, sexual orientation, social standing, creed or political affiliation. In medical practice, reward or financial gain should be a subordinate consideration.

Section 2. On entering the profession, a physician assumes the obligation of maintaining the honorable tradition that confers the well deserved title of a “friend of mankind”. The physician should cherish a proper pride in the calling and conduct himself/herself in accordance with this Code and in the generally accepted principles of the International Code of Medical Ethics.

Section 3. Physicians should fulfill the civic duties of a good citizen, must conform to the laws and cooperate with the proper authorities in the application of medical knowledge for the promotion of the common welfare.

Section 4. Physicians should work together in harmony and mutual respect.

Section 5. Physicians should cooperate with and safeguard the interest, reputation and dignity of paramedical and other health professionals.

Section 6. Physicians should be upright, diligent, sober, modest and well versed in both the science and the art of the profession.

Section 7. The promotion and advancement of the health of the patients should be prioritized over the benefits of the physicians and the health products industries.

ARTICLE II DUTIES OF PHYSICIANS TO THEIR PATIENTS

Section 1. A physician should be dedicated to provide competent medical care with full professional skill in accordance with the current standards of care, compassion, independence and respect for human dignity.

Section 2. A physician should be free to choose patients.

Section 3. In an emergency, provided there is no risk to his or her safety, a physician should administer at least first aid treatment and then refer the patient to the primary physician and/or to a more competent health provider and appropriate facility if necessary.

Section 4. In serious/difficult cases, or when the circumstances of the patient or the family so demand or justify, the attending physician should seek the assistance of the appropriate specialist.

Section 5. A physician should exercise good faith and honesty in expressing opinion/s as to the diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment of a case under his/her care. A physician shall respect the right of the patient to refuse medical treatment. Timely notice of the worsening of the disease should be given to the patient and/or family. A physician shall not conceal nor exaggerate the patient's condition except when it is to the latter's best interest. A physician shall obtain from the patient a voluntary informed consent. In case of unconsciousness or in a state of mental deficiency the informed consent may be given by a spouse or immediate relatives and in the absence of both, by the party authorized by an advanced directive of the patient. Informed consent in the case of minor should be given by the parents or guardian, members of the immediate family that are of legal age.

Section 6. The physician should hold as sacred and highly confidential whatever may be discovered or learned pertinent to the patient even after death, except when required in the promotion of justice, safety and public health.

Section 7. Professional fees should be commensurate to the services rendered with due consideration to the patient's financial status, nature of the case, time consumed and the professional standing and skill of the physician in the community.

ARTICLE III DUTIES OF PHYSICIANS TO THE COMMUNITY

Section 1. A physician should cooperate with the duly constituted health authorities in the education and enforcement of laws and regulations for the promotion of health. Furthermore, in times of epidemic and public calamity, except when his or her personal safety is at stake, the physician must attend to the victims, alert the public and duly constituted health authorities on the dangers of communicable diseases and enforce measures for prevention and cure in accordance with existing laws, rules and regulations.

Section 2. A physician shall assist the government in the administration of justice in accordance with law. He/she maybe accorded a fair and just remuneration when called upon as an expert witness.

Section 3. A physician is encouraged to expose and report to the proper authorities unlicensed medical practitioners, charlatans and quacks in as much as their nefarious practices may cause injury to health and life. A physician should never condone nor connive with such fake health providers.

Section 4. A physician shall not employ agents in the solicitation and recruitment of patients. For the promotion of medical practice, a physician may use professional cards, classified advertising, publications, internet, directories and signboards. Signboards shall not exceed one by two (1x2) meters in size. Except in internet web sites, only the name of the physician, field of specialty, office hours or office or residential addresses may appear. The act of the physician in publishing his or her personal superiority, special certificates or diplomas, post graduate training, specific methods of treatment, operative techniques or former connections with hospitals or clinics is not allowed. However, these matters may be placed by a physician within the confines of his clinic or residence. For internet web sites, recognizing the right of a patient to know the capabilities and qualifications of his doctor, special certificates or diplomas, post graduate training and former connections with hospitals or clinics may be posted.

Section 5. A physician involved in multi media must be well informed of the matter under discussion. Only the name of the physician and membership to a society or institution may be mentioned or posted. A physician should only make a general opinion and shall refrain from making a specific diagnosis, therapy or projection to individual cases in his appearances in the broadcast media. An article written by a physician must be evidence-based and disclose connections with pharmaceutical or health product companies. A physician shall not commercially endorse any medical or health product.

ARTICLE IV
DUTIES OF PHYSICIANS TO THEIR COLLEAGUES AND
TO THE PROFESSION

Section 1. A physician shall waive his professional fees to a colleague, his or her spouse, children and parents who are financially dependent on him.

Section 2. When necessary, the attending physician should always seek consultation from an available appropriate specialist.

Section 3. The primary and consultant physicians should always observe the proper protocol of the referral system. The consultant may make another referral but should seek permission from the primary physician. In making a referral, a physician should forward a clinical abstract and specify the purpose as to whether the case is for opinion/evaluation, for co-management, or for transfer of service.

Section 4. With the consent of the patient, in cases where a physician has to suspend service during temporary absences, the substitute physician shall treat the patient with the same dedication and quality of care extended to his/her own patient. The patient should be returned to the care of the primary physician as soon as possible.

Section 5. Whenever a physician makes a social or business call on a patient under the care of another, making comments pertaining to the case is unethical unless if an emergency arises.

Section 6. Whenever there is an irreconcilable difference of opinion in the management of a case, the matter should be referred to the Philippine Medical Association or the specialty society concerned.

Section 7. Members of the editorial board of medical journals should possess adequate qualifications. Written articles and scientific presentations in scientific conferences should include full disclosure of any pharmaceutical support and should be independent of any commercial influence.

Section 8. A physician shall not receive any commission for referring patients to a colleague, third person or institution. However, nominal gifts during occasions may be received by a physician.

Section 9. A physician is encouraged to report to the Philippine Medical Association or the Board of Medicine personal knowledge of any corrupt or dishonest conduct of the members of the profession.

Section 10. Continuing medical education conferences and professional meetings must contribute to improve and optimize patients care or address the educational needs of the targeted medical audience. They must be organized by a medical society on its own or in cooperation with sponsoring entities.

Section 11. Funds from commercial sources may be accepted for the benefit of the association or society.

Section 12. Physicians may accept reasonable subsidies from health and other industries to support their participation in CME events.

Section 13. The faculty/speaker/consultant of conferences or meetings is allowed to accept from health industries honoraria and reimbursement for reasonable transportation, lodging and meal expenses.

Section 14. Scholarships for physicians and medical students are permissible as long as the selection of scholars are made by the organizers or academic institutions concerned.

Section 15. Generic names shall be used during the course of CME activities. However, after the lectures, the sponsoring entity may promote or indicate their branded products.

Section 16. When commercial exhibits are part of the overall program, arrangements for these should not influence the planning nor interfere with the CME activities. Only relevant information of the product should be included in the exhibit area.

Article V

DUTIES OF PHYSICIANS TO ALLIED PROFESSIONALS

Section 1. Physicians should never pay nor receive commission to or from any allied health worker for cases referred.

ARTICLE VI

RELATIONSHIP OF PHYSICIANS WITH THE HEALTH PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

Section 1. The physician shall not derive any form of material gain from product samples.

Section 2. Physicians may participate in post-marketing or similar activities where they are asked to try new products on patients provided that the patients are properly informed and have given their informed consent. Physicians are encouraged to report or share the result of such activities to the duly constituted authorities.

Section 3. Only gifts of reasonable value that primarily entail benefit to patient care or related to physicians' work may be accepted by a physician from a health product company.

Section 4. Physicians may request donations for a charitable purpose for as long as it does not redound to his or her personal benefit.

Section 5. Research activities shall be ethically defensible, socially responsible, and scientifically valid. Any remuneration should be reasonable and should not constitute an enticement.

Section 6 Research trials conducted by physicians for an industry should be done in accordance with the national or institutional guidelines for the protection of human subjects.

ARTICLE VII AMENDMENTS

Section 1. The Board of Governors of the Association, upon recommendation of the Commission on Ethics may amend or repeal this code by a 2/3 vote of the members of the Board. Amendments shall be subsequently ratified by the General Assembly following the approval by the Board.