CMA Code of Ethics and Professionalism

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Policy document

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REPLACES
Code of ethics of the Canadian Medical Association (Update 2004)

TOPICS
Population health, health equity, public health

A. VIRTUES EXEMPLIFIED BY THE ETHICAL PHYSICIAN

Trust
A physician’s relationship with patients and the public is founded on a foundation of trust. Trust includes the belief in a physician’s honesty, integrity, competence, and fairness. It is the basis for the physician-patient relationship, which is essential for the delivery of quality care. Trust is also a fundamental value that underlies all ethical principles.

Confidentiality
A physician must maintain the confidentiality of information about a patient unless the patient authorizes disclosure.

Honesty
A physician should be truthful and honest in all dealings with patients, colleagues, and the public.

Respect
A physician should respect the autonomy of patients and respect the right to informed consent. This includes respecting patients’ right to refuse treatment and the right to make decisions about their own health and care.

Fairness
A physician should treat all patients with fairness and equality, regardless of their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or other factors.

Non-maleficence
A physician should always act to prevent harm to patients, and to minimize the harm caused by unavoidable risks.

Justice
A physician should strive for justice in all aspects of medical practice, recognizing the inherent value of human dignity and the rights of all people to live with dignity and respect.

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p. 1
# CMA CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM

The CMA Code of Ethics and Professionalism is an ethical guide that sets out the principles and standards of conduct expected of all members of the medical profession. This guide provides a framework for physicians to make decisions and provide care in a manner that upholds the highest ethical and professional standards.

## A. VIRTUES EXEMPLIFIED BY THE ETHICAL PHYSICIAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Virtue</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>A willingness to provide care and support those in need to the extent that is possible, while respecting the limits of one's professional and personal abilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>An honest and transparent attitude in all interactions involving the disclosure of information, including the provision of accurate and complete information to patients, colleagues, and the public.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>A commitment to maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct, including upholding confidentiality, avoiding conflicts of interest, and acting in the best interests of the patient and the profession.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prudence</td>
<td>An ability to make sound judgments and decisions, balancing the benefits and risks of various options, and acting in a manner that promotes the best interests of patients and the profession.</td>
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These virtues are essential in shaping the ethical standards and professional conduct expected of physicians, ensuring that they provide care in ways that are compassionate, honest, and principled.