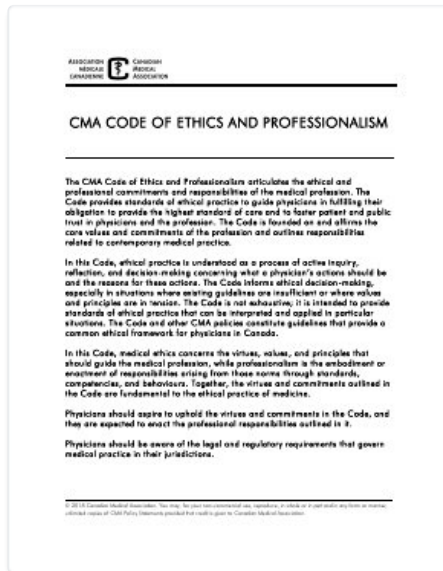


CMA Code of Ethics and Professionalism

<https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy13937>

POLICY TYPE	Policy document
DATE	2018-12-08
REPLACES	Code of ethics of the Canadian Medical Association (Update 2004)
TOPICS	Population health, health equity, public health

Documents



CMA CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM

The CMA Code of Ethics and Professionalism articulates the ethical and professional commitments and responsibilities of the medical profession. The Code provides standards of ethical practice to guide physicians in fulfilling their obligation to provide the highest standard of care and to foster patient and public trust in physicians and the profession. The Code is founded on and affirms the core values and commitments of the profession and outlines responsibilities related to contemporary medical practice.

In this Code, ethical practice is understood as a process of active inquiry, reflection, and decision making concerning what a physician's actions should be and the reasons for those actions. The Code affirms ethical decision-making, especially in situations where competing guidelines are conflicting or where values and principles are in tension. The Code is not prescriptive; it is intended to provide standards of ethical practice that can be interpreted and applied in particular situations. The Code and other CMA policies constitute guidelines that provide a common ethical framework for physicians in Canada.

In this Code, medical ethics concerns the virtues, values, and principles that should guide the medical profession, while professionalism is the endorsement or ownership of responsibilities arising from those virtues through character, commitments, and behaviours. Together, the virtues and commitments outlined in the Code are fundamental to the ethical practice of medicine.

Physicians should agree to uphold the virtues and commitments in the Code, and they are expected to enact the professional responsibilities outlined in it.

Physicians should be aware of the legal and regulatory requirements that govern medical practice in their jurisdictions.

A. VIRTUES EXEMPLIFIED BY THE ETHICAL PHYSICIAN



Compassion

A compassionate physician recognizes suffering and vulnerability, seeks to understand the unique circumstances of each patient and to alleviate the patient's suffering, and accompanies the suffering and vulnerable patient.



Honesty

An honest physician is forthright, respects the truth, and does their best to seek, preserve, and communicate that truth sensitively and respectfully.



Humility

A humble physician acknowledges and is cautious not to overstate the limits of their knowledge and skills or the limits of medicine, seeks advice and support from colleagues in challenging circumstances, and recognizes the patient's knowledge of their own circumstances.



Integrity

A physician who acts with integrity demonstrates consistency in their intentions and actions and acts in a truthful manner in accordance with professional expectations, even in the face of adversity.



Prudence

A prudent physician uses clinical and moral reasoning and judgment, considers all relevant knowledge and circumstances, and makes decisions carefully, in good conscience, and with due regard for principles of exemplary medical care.