

CODE OF ETHICS FOR PHARMACISTS

A profession is identified by the willingness of individual practitioners to comply with ethical and professional standards which exceed minimum legal requirements.

Pharmacists are health professionals who help people to maintain good health, to avoid ill health and, where appropriate, to acquire and make the best use of their medicines. The role of the pharmacist has changed significantly in the last twenty years. Whilst the fundamental ethical principles remain essentially the same, this Code of Ethics has been redrafted to reaffirm and state publicly the principles that form the basis of the roles and responsibilities of pharmacists. These principles, based on moral obligations and values, are established to enable national pharmaceutical organisations through their Codes of Ethics to guide pharmacists in their relationships with patients, other health professionals, and society generally. Pharma-

cists seek to act with fairness and equity in the allocation of health resources available to them.

Principles:

In the practice of their profession:

1. The pharmacist's prime responsibility is the good of the individual.

Obligations:

- to be objective,
- to put the good of the individual before personal or commercial interests (including financial interest),
- to promote the individual's right of access to safe and effective treatment,

2. The pharmacist shows the same dedication to all.

Obligations:

- to show respect for life and human dignity,
- to not discriminate between people,
- to strive to treat and inform each individual according to personal circumstances.

3. The pharmacist respects the individual's right to freedom of choice of treatment.

Obligation:

- to ensure that where the pharmacist is involved in developing care and treatment plans, this is done in consultation with the individual.

4. The pharmacist respects and safeguards the individual's right to confidentiality.

Obligation:

- to not disseminate information, which identifies the individual, without informed consent or due cause.

5. The pharmacist cooperates with colleagues and other professionals and respects their values and abilities.

Obligation:

- to cooperate with colleagues, and other professionals and agencies in efforts to promote good health and treat and prevent ill health.

6. The pharmacist acts with honesty and integrity in professional relationships.

Obligations:

- to act with conviction of conscience,
- to avoid practices, behaviour or work conditions that could impair professional judgement,

7. The pharmacist serves the needs of the individual, the community and society.

Obligation:

- to recognise the responsibilities associated with serving the needs of the individual on the one hand and society at large on the other.

8. The pharmacist maintains and develops professional knowledge and skills.

Obligation:

- to ensure competency in each pharmaceutical service provided, by continually updating knowledge and skills.

9. The pharmacist ensures continuity of care in the event of labour disputes, pharmacy closure or conflict with personal moral beliefs.

Obligation:

- to refer the patient to another pharmacist.
- To ensure that when a pharmacy closes, the patients are informed of the pharmacy to which their records, if held, have been transferred.