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## ADA Code of Ethics (October 1950)

American Dental Association

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## *Reports of Councils*

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### JUDICIAL COUNCIL

## Revised principles of ethics of the American Dental Association

At the ninety-first annual session of the Association held in Atlantic City October 30 to November 2, the House of Delegates adopted a revised Principles of Ethics. The text of the new instrument, which represents the combined thoughts of the Judicial Council and a committee of the Board of Trustees and which will serve in the future as a guide for the professional conduct of members is presented herewith.

### PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS

The practice of dentistry first achieved the stature of a profession in the United States where, through the heritage bestowed by the efforts of many generations of dentists, it acquired the three unfailing characteristics of a profession: education beyond the usual level; the primary duty of service to the public; the right to self-government.

The maintenance and enrichment of this heritage of professional status place on everyone who practices dentistry an obligation which should be willingly accepted and willingly fulfilled. This obligation cannot be reduced to a changeless series of urgings and prohibitions for, while the basic obligation is constant, its fulfillment may vary with the changing needs of a society composed of the human beings that a profession is dedicated to serve. The spirit and not the letter of the obligation, therefore, must be the guide of conduct for the professional man. In its essence, this obligation has been summarized for all time and for all men in the golden rule which asks only that "whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

#### THE DENTIST AS A MEMBER OF A PROFESSION

*Section 1. Education Beyond the Usual Level* • The right of a dentist to professional status rests in the knowledge, skill and experience with which he serves his patients and society. Every dentist has the obligation of keeping his knowledge and skill freshened by continuing education through all of his professional life.

*Section 2. Service to the Public* • The dentist has a right to win for himself those things which give him and his family the ability to take their proper place in the community which he serves, but there is no alternative for the professional man in that he must place first his service to the public rather than gain to himself.

*Section 3. Government of a Profession* • Every profession receives from society the right to regulate itself, to determine and judge its own members. Such regulation is achieved largely through the influence of the professional societies, and every

dentist has the dual obligation of making himself a part of a professional society and of observing its rules of ethics.

#### THE DENTIST'S DUTIES TO THE PUBLIC

The dentist's primary duty of serving the public is discharged by giving the highest type of service of which he is capable and by avoiding any conduct which leads to a lowering of esteem of the profession of which he is a member.

*Section 4. Leadership* • The dentist has the obligation of providing freely of his skills, knowledge and experience to society in those fields in which his qualifications entitle him to speak with professional competence. The dentist should be a leader in his community, especially in all efforts leading to the improvement of the dental health of the public.

*Section 5. Emergency Service* • The dentist has an obligation, when consulted in an emergency by the patient of another dentist, to attend to the conditions leading to the emergency and to refer the patient to his regular dentist who should be informed of the conditions found and treated.

*Section 6. Use of Auxiliary Personnel* • The dentist has an obligation to protect the health of his patient by not delegating to a person less qualified any service or operation which requires the professional competence of a dentist. The dentist has a further obligation of supervising the work of all auxiliary personnel in the interests of rendering the best service to the patient.

*Section 7. Consultation* • The dentist has the obligation of seeking consultation whenever the welfare of the patient will be safeguarded or advanced by having recourse to those who have special skills, knowledge and experience. A consultant

will hold the details of a consultation in confidence and will not assume responsibility for treatment without the consent of the attending practitioner.

*Section 8. Unjust Criticism* • The dentist has the obligation of not referring disparagingly to the services of another dentist in the presence of a patient. A lack of knowledge of conditions under which the services were afforded may lead to unjust criticism and to a lessening of a patient's confidence in the dental profession. If there is indisputable evidence of faulty treatment, the welfare of the patient demands that corrective treatment be instituted at once and in such a way as to avoid reflection on the previous dentist or on the dental profession. The dentist has the further obligation of exposing fully at the request of appropriate authorities consequential negligence or incompetence in any form.

*Section 9. Rebates, Split Fees and Commissions* • The dentist has the obligation of disclosing to his patients all of the elements involved in the establishment of a fee and he may not, therefore, secretly accept rebates, split fees or commissions from any source associated with the service rendered to the patient.

*Section 10. Secret Agents and Exclusive Methods* • The dentist has an obligation not to dispense or promote the use of drugs or other agents whose composition is secret. He also has the obligation not to dispense or prescribe except for limited experimental purposes any therapeutic agent, the value of which is not supported by scientific evidence. The dentist further has the obligation of not holding out as exclusive, any agent, method or technic.

*Section 11. Patents and Copyrights* • The dentist has the obligation of making the fruits of his discoveries and labors available to all when they are useful in safe-

guarding or promoting the health of the public. Patents or copyrights may be obtained by a dentist only when their primary purpose is the protection of the public and the profession.

*Section 12. Advertising* • The dentist has the obligation of advancing his reputation for fidelity, judgment and skill solely through his professional services to his patients and to society. The use of advertising in any form to solicit patients is inconsistent with this obligation because it reflects adversely on the dentist who employs it and lowers public esteem of the dental profession.

*Section 13. Cards and Letterheads* • A dentist may properly utilize professional cards, announcement cards, recall notices to patients of recent record and letterheads when the style and text are consistent with the dignity of the profession and with the custom of other dentists in the community.

*Section 14. Office Door Lettering and Signs* • A dentist may properly utilize office door lettering and signs provided that their style and text are consistent with the dignity of the profession and with the custom of other dentists in the community.

*Section 15. Announcements* • A dentist may properly send announcement cards when there is a change of location or an alteration of the character of practice. Such announcements may be sent only to dentists, members of other health professions or to patients of record. The style and text of such announcements shall be consistent with the dignity of the profession and with the custom of other dentists in the community.

*Section 16. Use of Professional Titles and Degrees* • A dentist may use the usual titles or degrees (Doctor, Dentist, D.D.S. or D.M.D.) in connection with his name

on cards, letterheads, office signs and announcements, but he may not so use his title or degree in connection with the promotion of any drug, agent, instrument or appliance.

*Section 17. Use of the Term "Clinic" or "Group Practice"* • A dentist may participate in a regularly established clinic or group service, but he may not apply the term "clinic" or similar designation to a dental practice when the use of such term may mislead the public directly or indirectly.

*Section 18. Limitation of Practice* • A dentist may indicate the limitation of his practice to one of the approved specialties in dentistry on his card, letterhead, announcements and office sign provided that such indication in style and text is consistent with the custom of the dentists of the community.

*Section 19. Directories* • A dentist may permit the listing of his name in a directory provided that all dentists in similar circumstances have access to a similar listing and provided that such listing is consistent in style and text with the custom of the dentists of the community.

*Section 20. Education of the Public* • A dentist may properly participate in a program for the education of the public on matters pertaining to dentistry provided such a program is in keeping with the dignity of the profession and has the approval of the dentists of a community or state acting through the appropriate agency of the dental society.

*Section 21. Official "Principles of Ethics"* • This statement will constitute the "Principles of Ethics" of the American Dental Association. Its constituent and component societies are urged to adopt additional provisions or interpretations not in conflict with these "Principles of Ethics" which would enable them to

serve more faithfully the traditions, customs and desires of the members of these societies.

*Section 22. Judicial Procedure* • Problems involving questions of ethics should be solved within the broad boundaries established in the "Principles of Ethics," by the component dental society. If a

satisfactory decision cannot be reached, the question should be referred, in turn, to the constituent society, the Judicial Council of the American Dental Association and House of Delegates of the American Dental Association, as provided in Chapter I, Section 40, H, of the Bylaws.

*Ernest G. Sloman, Chairman*

#### COUNCIL ON DENTAL THERAPEUTICS

### Council announces classification of additional products

The classification of products by the Council on Dental Therapeutics of the American Dental Association has been described in a previous report (*J.A.D.A.* 40:489, April, 1950). The Council's program now provides for classification of products in Group A, Group B, Group C and Group D. Products are reconsidered periodically and decisions are subject to change at any time that a substantial amount of new evidence becomes available. The files of the Council contain information on many drugs and dental cosmetics, and inquiries are welcome.

#### GROUP A

Listing of products in Group A means that at the time of their consideration, the items conformed with the provisions of acceptance established by the Council on Dental Therapeutics and adopted by the Board of Trustees of the American Dental Association. Items in this group will be listed in *Accepted Dental Remedies*, and may use the Seal of Acceptance, unless otherwise provided.

The following additional products are classified in Group A:

*Ledercillin Crystalline Procaine Penicillin G Troches, 5,000 Units (Lederle*

Laboratories Division, American Cyanamid Company): Each troche is stated to contain 5,000 units crystalline procaine penicillin G in a flavored base. See *A.D.R.*, ed. 16, p. 43.

*Penicillin G Procaine in Aqueous Suspension, 300,000 Units per cc.* (Abbott Laboratories): Each cc. of aqueous suspension is stated to contain penicillin G procaine, 300,000 units, together with suspending and dispersing agents. Marketed in 1 cc. cartridges; 1-dose vials, 5-dose vials and 10-dose vials. See *A.D.R.*, ed. 16, p. 43.

*Aureomycin Hydrochloride<sup>1</sup> (Crystalline) Capsules, 50 mg., 250 mg.* (Lederle Laboratories Division, American Cyanamid Company): Each capsule is stated to contain aureomycin hydrochloride crystalline powder and excipients. See *A.D.R.*, ed. 16, p. 38. (For report, see page 65.)

<sup>1</sup> Patented. Patent No. 2,482,055. See *A.D.R.* ed. 16, p. iv.