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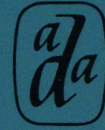


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PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS

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 and 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 ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Revised to January 1, 1967

The following statements constitute the *Principles of Ethics* of the American Dental Association. The 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 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.

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 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.

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 prescribing and 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 undertake treatment without the consent of the attending practitioner.

Section 8

Unjust Criticism and Expert Testimony. 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 the 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 also has the obligation of cooperating with appropriate public officials on request by providing expert testimony.

Section 9

Rebates and Split Fees. The dentist may not accept or tender "rebates" or "split fees".

Section 10

Secret Agents and Exclusive Methods. The dentist has an obligation not to prescribe, dispense or promote the use of drugs or other agents whose complete formulae are not available to the dental profession. He also has the obligation not to prescribe or dispense, except for limited investigative purposes, any therapeutic agent, the value of which is not supported by scientific evidence. The dentist has the further 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 safeguarding or promoting the health of the public. Patents and copyrights may be secured by a dentist provided that they and the remuneration derived from them are not used to restrict research, practice or the benefits of the patented or copyrighted material.

Section 12

Advertising. Advertising reflects adversely on the dentist who employs it and lowers the public esteem of the dental profession. 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.

Section 13

Cards, Letterheads and Announcements. A dentist may properly utilize professional cards, announcement cards, recall notices to patients of 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.

Announcement cards may be sent when there is a change in location or an alteration in the character of practice, but only to other dentists, to members of other health professions and to patients of record.

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

Use of Professional Titles and Degrees. A dentist may use the titles or degrees, Doctor, Dentist, D.D.S. or D.M.D., in connection with his name on cards, letterheads, office door signs and announcements. A dentist who also possesses a medical degree may use this degree in connection with his name on cards, letterheads, office door signs and announcements. A dentist who has been certified by a national certifying board for one of the specialties approved by the American Dental Association may use the title "diplomate" in connection with his specialty on his cards, letterheads and announcements if such usage is consistent with the custom of dentists in the community. A dentist may not use his title or degree in connection with the promotion of any drug, agent, instrument or appliance.

The use of eponyms in connection with drugs, agents, instruments or appliances is generally to be discouraged.

Section 16

Use of the Terms "Clinic" and "Group Practice". Unless the use of the term "clinic" has long been established by the custom of dentists in a community as applicable to a dental practice, it is strongly recommended that the term "clinic" be limited to designate public or quasi-public

institutions established on a not-for-profit basis for the purpose of providing dental health care.

The use of the term "group practice", in accordance with the following definition, is recommended as applicable to a dental practice and as an alternative to the term "clinic" when its use is consistent with existing statutes and the custom of the dentists in the community:

Group practice is that type of dental practice in which ethical, licensed dentists, sometimes in association with members of other health professions, agree formally between themselves on certain central arrangements designed to advance the economical and efficient conduct of a dental practice in order to render an improved health service to the patient.

Section 17

Contract Practice. A dentist may enter into an agreement with individuals and organizations to provide dental health care provided that the agreement does not permit or compel practices which are in violation of these *Principles of Ethics*.

Section 18

Announcement of Limitation of Practice. Only a dentist who limits his practice exclusively to one of the special areas approved by the American Dental Association for limited practice may include a statement of his limitation in announcements, cards, letterheads and directory listings (consistent with the custom of dentists of the community), provided at the time of the announcement, he has met the existing educational requirements and standards set by the American Dental Association for members wishing to announce limitation of practice, or possesses a state license permitting announcement in an area approved by the American Dental Association.

In accord with the established ethical ruling that dentists should not claim or imply superiority, use of the phrases "Specialist in _____" or "Specialist on _____" in announcements, cards, letter-

heads or directory listings should be discouraged. The use of the phrase "Practice limited to _____" is preferable.

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 in the community.

Section 20

Health Education of the Public. A dentist may properly participate in a program of health education of the public involving such media as the press, radio, television and lecture, provided that such programs are in keeping with the dignity of the profession and the custom of the dental profession of the community.

Section 21

Judicial Procedure. Problems involving questions of ethics should be solved at the local level within the broad boundaries established in these *Principles of Ethics* and within the interpretation of the code of ethics of the component society. If a satisfactory decision cannot be reached, the question should be referred, on appeal, to the constituent society, the Judicial Council of the American Dental Association and the House of Delegates of the American Dental Association, as provided in Chapter XI of the *Bylaws* of the American Dental Association.



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