



THE COLLEGE OF PHARMACISTS OF MANITOBA

FEBRUARY 10, 2014

**EXPLANATORY DOCUMENT: APPLYING THE
CODE OF ETHICS IN PHARMACY PRACTICE**

Preamble

The **Code of Ethics** of The College of Pharmacists of Manitoba was substantially revised when it was approved by the members at the Annual General Meeting on April 12th, 2012. This Code of Ethics will come into effect January 1st, 2014 with the proclamation of the *December 2006 Pharmaceutical Act*.

An effort has been made to anchor the **Statements** of the Code of Ethics in the basic principles of bio-medical ethics. Four major principles form the core of biomedical ethics. The principle of **autonomy** refers to the respect for the person and their personal liberty to determine their own actions. The principle of **non-maleficence** refers to a need to avoid harm. The principle of **beneficence** refers to the need to do what benefits patients. And finally the principle of **justice** refers to the need to treat people fairly.

Additional rules help to support these four main ethical principles. The concept of **veracity** is related to the principle of autonomy and requires that we are truthful with patients. The concepts of **privacy** and **confidentiality** also are related to respecting the autonomy of patients. The ethical rule of **fidelity** refers to promise of care, our professional covenant with patients. It is important to seek the welfare of patients, to honour our professional promise of care and ensure that patients are not abandoned.

The Code of Ethics consists of ten **Statements** that express in broad terms the embodiment of bio-medical ethical principles for the pharmacy profession. As a self-governing profession, pharmacists have been given the privilege of defining our code of ethics. Beyond *The Pharmaceutical Act* and regulations, the Code of Ethics helps to define the values of ideal practice and the norms of professional practice. Since the concepts are in some respects abstract, the statements have been grounded in some more concrete **obligations**. The obligations provide examples of how the ethical statements might apply in pharmacy practice.

In many respects the strength of our Code of Ethics represents the strength and integrity of a profession. It is the foundation of professional behavior, actions and attitudes and a reflection of our current professional norms. Together with *The Pharmaceutical Act* and regulations it represents an additional pillar in self-governance to enable the College to fulfill its mandate to protect the public.

This explanatory document for members to apply the Code of Ethics was approved by Council on February 10, 2014.

Statement I

Pharmacists shall maintain a high standard of professional competence throughout their practice.

Obligations:

Restrict practice to areas within the limitations of personal competence.

Self-assess practice and assume responsibility for continuous improvement of knowledge and skill.

Keep informed about new pharmaceutical knowledge, clinical literature and guidelines through a commitment to lifelong learning to maintain relevant knowledge and skills.

Undertake further training and professional development to maintain competence in practice.

Practice only when fit and competent to do so.

Do not misuse or abuse substances that affect ability to practice competently.

Statement II

Pharmacists shall cooperate with colleagues and other health care professionals to ensure optimal patient-centered care.

Obligations:

Challenge the judgment of colleagues or other healthcare professionals if there is reason to believe their decisions could compromise the safety or quality of care.

Consult with other health professionals to ensure optimal patient care.

Cooperate with other pharmacists and other health professionals to assist a patient to achieve their health care goals.

Work with pharmacists, other health care professionals, to promote safe and effective pharmacy care.

Statement III

Pharmacists shall contribute to societal health needs and promote justice in the distribution of health resources.

Obligations:

Assist in the selection of cost effective therapies that ensure quality care.

Ensure that the pharmacy work environment has adequate human resources (pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and other staff) to enable optimal practice and meet patient health care needs.

Statement IV

Pharmacists shall respect and protect the patient's right of confidentiality. *

Obligations:

Provide care in a manner that protects each patient's privacy.

Seek only the information needed to make informed decisions about the patient's health and treatment.

Use information obtained in practice for the purposes for which it was obtained.

Inform patients of the boundaries of professional confidentiality that may require the use and disclosure of their personal health information to other health care professionals.

* Except in circumstances where legally compelled/authorized to release the information

Statement V

Pharmacists shall respect the autonomy, values and dignity of each patient.

Obligations:

Respect the right of patients to accept or reject any treatment, care or professional service.

Recognize the right of informed patients to make choices about their care

Ensure treatment, care and professional services do not discriminate against any patient.

Listen to each patient and the patient's caregivers and seek to understand the patient's values and health goals.

Provide patients with information they need and want to make informed decisions about their healthcare.

Respect the autonomy of a minor who is able to make decisions about their health and health care and is able to consent to care.

Encourage and assist all patients in becoming active participants in their care to the greatest degree that is possible or desired by the patient.

Statement VI

Pharmacists shall respect and maintain a professional relationship with each patient.

Obligations:

Recognize the patient-pharmacist relationship is a covenant, a trusting professional relationship, which the pharmacist upholds by placing the welfare of patients above all other factors.

Be polite and considerate with each patient.

Maintain proper professional boundaries with all patients.

Leave treatment of self and immediate family to other health professionals except for minor conditions or emergency circumstances.

Take special care to maintain boundaries and safe guard the well-being of patients who are vulnerable.

Statement VII

Pharmacists shall hold the health and safety of each patient to be of primary consideration.

Obligations:

Act in the best interests of the patient.

Avoid, resolve for the well-being of the patient affected or declare any personal or professional conflict of interest that might arise to any patient that might be affected.

Do not ask for or accept gifts or inducements that may affect or be perceived to affect my professional judgment.

Seek to prevent harm to each patient; should harm occur, disclose it to the patient, and mitigate or treat the harm.

Only provide drugs and health-related products that are of good quality from safe and proven sources.

Do not exploit a patient for personal advantage.

Act in the best interest of patients by seeking and recommending appropriate drug therapy to address each patient's values and health goals.

Statement VIII

Pharmacists shall act with honesty and integrity.

Obligations:

Honesty is always part of any professional interactions and business dealings related to the practice of pharmacy or the operation of a pharmacy.

Do not participate in efforts to deceive a patient.

Do not have any arrangement with a prescriber that could be perceived as affecting the prescriber's independence or judgment in prescribing.

Do not tolerate unethical or unprofessional conduct by colleagues or other health care professionals and report any unethical or unprofessional conduct to the appropriate regulatory body.

Respond in a transparent, courteous and constructive manner to all complaints and criticism from patients, the public or other health care professionals.

Statement IX

Pharmacists shall respect the rights of patients to receive healthcare.

Obligations:

Recognize personal limitations and refer patients to other health care professionals as needed.

Ensure continuity of care by providing pharmacy care for a patient until it is no longer required or wanted or until another suitable health care professional has assumed responsibility for their care.*

Arrange practice to ensure that patients are able to obtain services from another pharmacist or pharmacy in a reasonable time frame if unable to provide the pharmacy service or unwilling to provide the service due to conscientious objection.

- * In accordance with 56(1) 11 of the regulations, exceptions can be made in circumstances where the member is at risk

Statement X

Pharmacists shall respect and honour the profession of pharmacy.

Obligations:

Practice only in conditions where professional judgment is not compromised.

Raise concerns if working conditions are such that professional practice and integrity are compromised.

Raise concerns if working conditions could compromise patient care or public safety.

Take appropriate action if others raise concerns to you.

Contribute to the future of the profession by participating in the education and mentorship of pharmacy students, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.

Honour the privilege of self-regulation by supporting the regulatory institution and participating in the education of pharmacy students