
Approved by the FIP Council in August 2014 in Bangkok.

FIP STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Codes of ethics for pharmacists

Introduction

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

The role of the pharmacist is continuing to develop. The pharmacist is recognised as the expert on medicines.¹ Pharmacists are given the responsibility, within the overall health system, to help people to maintain good health, to avoid ill health and, where medication is appropriate, to promote the responsible use of medicines. They assist patients, their carers,² and those to whom they provide professional services to gain maximum therapeutic benefit from their medicines. To practise as a pharmacist means undertaking any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses his/her professional skills and knowledge. Pharmaceutical practice is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care, but also includes working in a non-clinical relationship with consumers, patients or carers, in the discovery, development, manufacturing of medicines, in maintaining the supply chain or in procurement, in general management or administration, in education, research, advisory, regulatory, or policy development roles. The code of ethics will therefore apply to pharmacists in all practice settings. At all times, pharmacists should strive to provide the best possible care for consumers, patients and carers, with due regard for the limitations of available resources and the principles of equity and justice. Pharmacists can only fulfil their role if they are afforded the necessary professional autonomy to act in the best interests of patients and carers.

Recognising these circumstances, this statement of professional standards relating to codes of ethics for pharmacists is intended to reaffirm and state publicly the obligations that form the basis of the roles and responsibilities of pharmacists. These obligations, based on established ethical principles, are provided to enable national associations and regulators of pharmaceutical practitioners, through their individual codes of ethics, to guide pharmacists in their relationships with patients and carers, and with other health professionals and society generally. They should also guide individual pharmacists in their daily practice of the profession.

¹ The term “medicines” is used, as is recommended by the World Health Organization. The terms “medications” or “drugs” may be more common in some settings.

² The terms “carers” and “caregivers” are considered to be synonymous.



In some settings or jurisdictions, such codes of ethics form the basis for the disciplinary powers of regulators or statutory bodies.

Against this background, and for this purpose, the FIP recommends that:

1. In every country, pharmacists associations produce or support the development by competent authorities of an up-to-date Code of Ethics for pharmacists setting out their professional obligations and take steps to ensure that pharmacists comply with the provisions of that Code.
2. Consideration should also be given to contributing to the development of transdisciplinary Codes of Ethics, where the opportunities exist to do so.
3. In every country, institutions offering pharmaceutical education and continuing professional development should include the Code of Ethics, and its underlying principles of respect for the autonomy of persons, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice, in their offerings for all students and professionals.
4. The obligations of pharmacists formalised in these codes should at least include:
 - to act with honesty and integrity in their relationships with consumers, patients and carers, and other health professionals, including pharmacy practice colleagues, and not engage in any behaviour or activity likely to bring the profession into disrepute or to undermine public confidence in the profession;
 - to ensure that their priorities are the safety, well-being and the best interests of those to whom they provide professional services and that they act at all times as autonomous health professionals, recognising the challenges posed by divided loyalties and the potential in many settings for conflicts of interest that need careful management;
 - to always act professionally, in accordance with scientific principles and professional standards, including those developed by the International Pharmaceutical Federation.
 - to co-operate and collaborate with colleagues, other health professionals, consumers, patients, carers and other actors in the healthcare delivery system to ensure that the best possible quality of healthcare is provided both to individuals and the community at large, while always considering the limitations of available resources and the principles of equity and justice;
 - to respect and protect the confidentiality of patient information acquired or accessed in the course of providing professional services and to ensure that such information is only disclosed with the informed consent of that individual or as allowed by applicable legislation and regulation;
 - to respect patients' rights and recognise and respect the cultural differences, beliefs and values of patients, carers and other healthcare professionals, particularly in the event of conflict with their own moral or religious beliefs;
 - to ensure continuity of care for the patient in the event of conflict with their own moral or religious beliefs, based on respect for patient autonomy;

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- to comply with legislation and accepted codes and standards of practice in the provision of all professional services and pharmaceutical products and to ensure the integrity of the supply chain for medicines; and
- to ensure that they maintain competence through continuing professional development.

Other FIP Statements which have relevance for this Statement include:

The Tokyo Declaration (1993) Standards for quality of pharmacy services (FIP Guidelines for Good Pharmacy Practice, September 1993) and revised version FIP/WHO GPP (1997, Vancouver)

FIP Statement of Professional Standards on the Role of the Pharmacist in Encouraging Adherence to Long-Term Treatments (Sydney 2003)

FIP Statement of Professional Standards on Continuing Professional Development (2002, Nice)

FIP Statement of Policy on Counterfeit Medicines (2003, Sydney)

FIP Centennial Declaration (2012, Amsterdam)

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Proposed by	:	FIP Bureau
This Statement replaces the following previous FIP Statements	:	This Statement replaces that adopted by the Council of FIP in 2004, as well as the FIP Statement of Policy on Confidentiality of Information gained in the course of Pharmacy Practice, adopted in 2004.
This Statement can be quoted by stating:	:	FIP Statement of Professional Standards – Code of ethics for pharmacists. FIP, 2014. Available at: www.fip.org/statements
This Statement references the following FIP Statements and documents:	:	FIP Reference Document on Pharmacist Ethics and Professional Autonomy: Imperatives for Keeping Pharmacy Aligned with the Public Interest. FIP, 2014. Available at: www.fip.org/statements

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