

# **Code of Ethics**

of the  
Canadian Organization of Medical Physicists  
and the  
Canadian College of Physicists in Medicine



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This code supersedes any codes of ethics previously approved or endorsed by COMP or CCPM.

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## HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This document is organized into three sections.

Section 1 is a Preamble.

Section 2 contains the Principles; these establish the framework for the Members' ethical conduct. The ten Principles in the COMP & CCPM Code of Ethics are based on core values drawn from the Medical Ethics community such as beneficence, autonomy, justice, prudence, and honesty. Every Member's professional conduct should be consistent with these Principles. The Principles are equal in significance and are ordered to follow a logical progression from consideration of the patient, to relationships with colleagues, to conduct within the broader profession.

Section 3 contains Guidelines for how to interpret the Principles in the Member's professional activities. This section provides guidance and should not be perceived as a set of rules. The guidance is organized in subsections by relevance to specific professional settings. Subsection 3.I. applies to all Members regardless of practice setting and should be read and internalized by all Members. Subsections 3.II. through 3.V. provide additional guidance applicable to specific settings.

The following terms are used in this document:

- "Must" and "must not": Used to indicate that adherence to the recommendation is considered necessary to conform to this Code of Ethics.
- "Should" and "should not": Used to indicate a prudent practice to which exceptions may occasionally be made in appropriate circumstances.

## SECTION 1. PREAMBLE

The Canadian Organization of Medical Physicists (COMP), a Canadian based organization of medical physicists, promotes the application of physics to medicine through scientific meetings, technical publications, educational programs, and the development of professional standards. COMP represents Members involved in clinical practice (including radiation oncology, diagnostic radiology, nuclear medicine, magnetic resonance imaging, and health physics), research, academia, industry, and federal and provincial regulatory activities. The professionals represented by COMP have a key role in assuring safe and effective patient care through best possible procedures with available technology and resources. This entails the need for COMP Members to conduct all their work with integrity, excellence, and by exhibiting sound ethical behaviour. The Canadian College of Physicists in Medicine (CCPM) serves the public by identifying through certification and distinction individuals who have acquired, demonstrated, and maintained a requisite standard of knowledge, skill and understanding essential to the clinical practice of medical physics. Members of COMP with suitable educational background and experience may become Members or Fellows of CCPM by passing examinations and maintain certification through the CCPM recertification process. The following Code of Ethics of COMP and CCPM articulates a set of core values intended to aid all Members and Fellows and those conducting business with COMP (Affiliate members) or CCPM in maintaining ethical conduct in their profession. The Principles, along with guidelines to interpret the principles, are not intended to be a set of rules but rather a framework by which Members may determine the appropriateness of their conduct in relationships with patients, employers, co-workers, colleagues, members of other professions, governments, and the public. The document also describes the expectations of the organization with regards to the ethical behaviour of its Members. All Members of COMP and CCPM are expected to adhere to this Code of Ethics, even if there may be other codes of conduct to which the member is bound.

For the purpose of this document “Member” refers to:

- COMP or CCPM full members,
- COMP or CCPM associate members,
- COMP student members,
- COMP retired members,
- COMP affiliate members,
- CCPM Fellows and/or
- anyone else certified by or granted a distinction by the CCPM.

Specific grievance procedures are outside the scope of this document. Grievances or reports of unethical conduct may be reported to either COMP or CCPM.

Reconciliation Statement – working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis

COMP and CCPM are committed to reconciliation. Both organizations acknowledge the acts of colonization specific to First Nations, Inuit and Métis, including the removal of children from their families to attend residential school and legislation that made illegal their medical, social and spiritual institutions has resulted in inequities across health and social well-being indicators. Despite these acts of colonization, First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples demonstrate resilience and strength grounded in their cultures and traditions.

COMP and CCPM accept their role in reconciliation and are working to implement the Calls to Action made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Specifically, COMP is focusing on the health-related Calls to Action that highlight the need to increase First Nation, Inuit and Métis healing practices in health care delivery and improve their retention within the health care system and to improve the cultural competency of all health care workers. COMP will be guided by engagement and research methods that are endorsed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and First Nations, Inuit or Métis as to facilitate the realization of the Calls to Action.

## **SECTION 2. PRINCIPLES**

- I. Members must hold as paramount the best interests of the patient under all circumstances.
- II. Members must strive to provide the best quality patient care and ensure the safety, privacy, and confidentiality of patients and research participants.
- III. Members must act with integrity in all aspects of their work. Integrity is defined as “Steadfast adherence to a strict code of ethics.”[1]
- IV. Members must interact in an open, collegial, and respectful manner amongst themselves and in relation to other professionals, including those in training, and safeguard their confidences and privacy.
- V. Members must strive to be impartial in all professional interactions, and must disclose and formally manage any real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.
- VI. Members must strive to continuously maintain and improve their knowledge and skills while encouraging the professional development of their colleagues and of those under their supervision.

- VII. Members must operate within the limits of their knowledge, skills, and available resources in the provision of healthcare. Members must enable practices in which patients are provided the levels of medical physicist expertise and case-specific attention as appropriately supports the modalities of their care.
- VIII. Members must adhere to the legal and regulatory requirements that apply to the practice of their profession.
- IX. Members must support the ideals of justice and fairness in the provision of healthcare and allocation of limited healthcare resources.
- X. Members are professionally responsible and accountable for their practice, attitudes, and actions, including inactions and omissions.

### **SECTION 3. GUIDELINES**

These Guidelines are intended to assist Members in interpreting and implementing the Principles outlined above. The COMP & CCPM Code of Ethics does not aim to provide specific actions for any specific or potential ethical dilemma; rather, it describes the ethical environment in which such actions and moral judgments can be fostered. The subsection on General Guidelines applies to all practice environments (3.I). Specific guidelines and clarifications as they might apply to various professional practice settings are offered in the subsequent subsections (3.II - 3.V).

#### **I. General guidelines for professional conduct**

Professional work practice depends on the Members working together with patients and colleagues toward shared aims and with mutual respect to foster an environment where best work can flourish. This section outlines the core responsibilities and personal behaviour standards expected by COMP and CCPM Members to achieve professional work practice.

##### **A. Responsibilities**

*a. Responsibility to peers and to the profession:* Members have a responsibility to:

- support the profession and contribute to the knowledge and capability of the medical physics profession as a whole;
- improve public understanding of the role, function, and responsibilities of a medical physicist;
- establish the best possible practice environment;
- remain cognizant that their actions and inactions have effect not just in the present but may also carry weight as established precedent, with impact on both future patients and future colleagues; and
- conduct all their work with diligence and integrity.

*b. Responsibility to the public:* Members must strive to improve the public welfare through:

- disseminating scientific knowledge in a fair and unbiased manner;
- supporting fair and just allocation of healthcare resources; and
- maintaining standards of privacy and confidentiality in all environments, including online communication.

c. *Responsibility to the employer:* With any verbal or written contractual agreement, Members have the responsibility to understand the mission, philosophy, and goals of the organization with which the contract is made.

Members must carefully weigh their employment decisions to ensure that they agree with and can ethically align themselves with the organizational viewpoint before entering into the contract. Once having entered into a contractual arrangement, Members should respect the organization's cultures, policies, and procedures. That respect must be balanced with ongoing adherence to the Principles. The onus is on each Member at all times to monitor whether the workplace is making demands of unacceptable personal behaviour, and if so to take appropriate personal action to resolve the conflict.

## B. Personal behaviour

Each Member's behaviour reflects on the profession as a whole. Trust in the fidelity of the work and in the person performing the work is essential to the regard of the profession.

Members must:

- honestly represent their activities, services, and products delivered;
- truthfully and accurately document and report their academic and professional credentials;
- be mindful of how their online behaviour may reflect on themselves and the profession and use social media in a professional manner;
- claim credit only for continuing education courses, programs, and sessions attended and completed; and
- claim recognition, credit, or remuneration only for services rendered or products delivered.

## C. Work environment

A culture of safety and inclusivity, fostered by an environment free of political, ideological, or religious pressures or constraints, contributes to a positive workplace where diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experience are valued.

a. *Diversity:* Members should acknowledge that each individual is unique and respect individual differences. These differences include race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, education, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. A work environment that embraces diverse perspectives can lead to an increase in creativity and productivity.

b. *Inclusivity:* Members should strive to promote an environment where all parties, including those traditionally marginalized or excluded, feel a sense of belonging and are empowered to participate in the majority culture as full and valued members of the community. Members should use constructive and supportive language and maintain a respectful demeanor when interacting with all members of the professional community, including patients, research subjects, patients' family members, and other caregivers.

c. *Discrimination:* When acting in roles that carry management authority, Members must treat fairly and with respect all those with whom they have professional relationships, evaluating others based on professional merit alone. To prevent favoritism and discrimination, it is essential to set appropriate criteria when assessing individuals for professional opportunities. Members must acknowledge and minimize bias to eliminate discrimination and promote fairness in all roles they may assume.

*d. Harassment:* Any behaviour that contributes to a hostile, intimidating, and/or unwelcoming environment is a form of harassment and is unacceptable. Examples of harassment include verbal or physical abuse, bullying, demeaning comments, or any conduct that directly or indirectly contributes to a demeaning, threatening, or offensive environment.

*e. Sexual harassment:* Any unwanted verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature is sexual harassment and is unacceptable, regardless of either party's gender or sexual orientation. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other unwelcome verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

*f. Exploitative relationships:* Members must not exploit any person with whom they have a professional relationship, including relationships between educators and students or trainees. Exploitation can be, but is not limited to, coercing a person to perform work without equitable compensation, forcing a person to act against their will or consent, or creating working conditions where some person(s) is treated unfairly for the benefit of others.

#### D. General workplace ethics

The development of good professional practice depends upon high personal standards of conduct. Such standards rely on personal and professional integrity, professional responsibility and accountability, respect for professional boundaries, and advocacy.

*a. Professional relationships:* All interactions with colleagues should be fair, honest, and respectful. Where appropriate, Members should strive to share their skill and experience, and to assist with the professional development of colleagues. Those who are in a supervisory position have an obligation to guide their associates. When a Member assigns tasks within their scope of practice to support staff under the Member's supervision, such assignment does not absolve the Member of legal, ethical, or other professional responsibility for the quality of the practice or deliverables. The assigned task is the responsibility of the supervisor.

*b. Competence:* Members must:

- undertake only work that they are qualified to perform;
- be respectful and transparent about the limitations of their knowledge, skill, and experience; and
- seek additional education, training, or consultation before performing tasks for which they have not acquired competency.

*c. Maintenance of knowledge and skills:* Members must strive to improve their professional knowledge and skills, including but not limited to participation in relevant continuing education activities. Members should offer to share pertinent knowledge and skills with their colleagues as appropriate.

*d. Resources:* Members must act as responsible stewards of the healthcare resources entrusted to them by endeavoring to maintain an efficient and effective practice.

*e. Response to impaired or incompetent colleagues:* Members should intercede to ensure the safety of any individual (public, patient, or colleague) if a colleague appears impaired or incompetent and it is perceived that continued involvement by that colleague would jeopardize an individual's welfare. In some jurisdictions, reporting of an impaired colleague may be mandatory.

*f. Communicating incidents:* Members should report adverse incidents within established reporting and learning systems. In some jurisdictions, the reporting of certain adverse incidents is mandatory and, depending on the Member's role in the organization, the Member may bear

responsibility for making that report in a timely manner. Situations can arise wherein the organization or powerful individuals within the organization forbid the mandatory reporting. This does not absolve the Member of their responsibility. Members should encourage and support other healthcare professionals to report incidents.

*g. Relationship with regulators:* Members must assist and cooperate with regulators in the performance of their duties in an honest and respectful manner. Members should embrace opportunities to collaborate with regulatory bodies in drafting regulations. Members must comply fully with regulatory requirements for which they bear responsibility by way of their role in an organization.

*h. Whistleblower protection:* Members must respect the right of an individual (whistleblower) to report an unethical, fraudulent, or unacceptable behaviour or practice. Members must not participate in or take punitive or retaliatory action against individuals who file such reports.

*i. Peer review:* Members participating in any review process of an individual's or a group's work must strive to ensure that the process is constructive for the reviewed professional and that it results in insight and recommendations that can directly contribute to assessing and potentially improving the reviewed professional's practice. The reviewer's primary professional obligation is to help the reviewed professional recognize how to improve their professional practice. Members must be very clear when accepting a request to perform a review outside either a peer-to-peer request or the standard practices of a shared employer as to the structure and ground rules of the review. Members who contract or otherwise agree to perform such a third party review must be clear from the outset of the review process to whom the report will be made and to what extent the reviewed peer is engaged in the process. It is always preferable that the report be made privately to the peer physicist and shared with the third party only at the reviewed peer's discretion. If the report is to be made directly to third parties, the reviewer should not proceed without establishing appropriate ground rules of trust with the reviewed peer. All information used to judge a reviewed professional's performance must be substantiated and used in good faith to help the reviewed professional; opinions based on reports other than what the reviewer has directly observed or experienced (hearsay), or opinions not supported by clear evidence must be disregarded.

*j. Conflicts of interest:* A conflict of interest is a situation in which one's position of trust with a party is actually, or potentially, compromised by virtue of relationships with other parties and/or by self-interest. Conflict of interest is not inherently unethical, but there is a risk that unethical behaviours can arise from incentives inherent in the conflict of interest. Conflicts may exist within an organization, a regulatory or accrediting body, an educational setting, in industry, or in clinical practice environments and may consist of financial, political, or personal interests. Conflicts of interest can be difficult for the conflicted individual to recognize, and for that reason it is useful to seek independent assessment of a situation in which decision-making affects multiple parties with whom the individual has authority. While not all conflicts of interest must be avoided, Members must disclose conflicts of interest to any involved party and resolve or manage them appropriately. Many conflicts of interest can be mitigated by establishing well defined roles and boundaries or by having a conflict of interest management plan that is administered by an uninvolved party. When the conflicts of interest cannot be otherwise managed, the Members must recuse themselves from the specific activities. Where explicit procedures are in place for conflict of interest management, the Member must abide by them. To ensure fairness and equity, Members should not participate in supervision, employment actions, evaluation, or the direct setting of salary or wages for an individual for whom the Member cannot be assured of having reasonable objectivity because of a current or prior close personal relationship. Regardless of how the conflict of interest is disclosed or managed, the responsibility remains with the Member to act in accordance with the COMP and CCPM Code of Ethics in all matters.



## II. Clinical ethics

Members who practice in a healthcare environment may find themselves in a position to directly affect patient outcome and share the responsibility of the overall quality of the patient's diagnostic examination or treatment while under the medical facility's care. As such, they are ethically obliged to embrace patient welfare as their primary professional responsibility and place it above their own personal interests.

### A. Responsibility to patients

- Members must respect the autonomy and dignity of all patients.
- Members should be cognizant of standards of patient privacy and confidentiality that must be maintained in all environments, including online. Where formal requirements exist, they must be honoured. The absence of formal requirements does not constitute permission by omission.
- Members communicating to the media or public via any means should clearly state whether the information provided is based upon scientific studies, expert consensus, professional experience, or personal opinion.
- Members must engage in appropriate continuing medical physics education activities to maintain the knowledge and skills necessary to provide high quality care for patients.
- Members must regard patient's interests as paramount when engaged in any education, research, or other activity.

### B. Relationship with caregivers and other healthcare providers

Members must interact with caregivers and other healthcare professionals to achieve the primary goal of benefitting patients. Channels of communication must remain open to optimize patient outcome. Members should support the development and implementation of systems that facilitate communications with other disciplines involved in patient care.

### C. Resources

Members should not routinely take upon themselves more work than can be sustainably performed by a single individual. Accepting responsibility for more work than the Member can safely perform may deprive patients of the medical physics services necessary to meet current standards of care.

Members who are managers must respect the personal limitations of those they manage.

Members should not forgo proper testing and quality assurance due to inadequate provision of time or equipment. In situations where the hospital or supervisor will not provide the necessary resources of expertise, time, and equipment for a patient's care, it is incumbent on the Member to accurately represent the scope of work actually performed and be explicit about work that could not be performed. The Member's further responsibility is to advocate for structural changes which result in allocation of the required resources or, alternatively, recommend consideration of referral to a properly supported facility.

## III. Research ethics

Research has its own set of ethical obligations contained in federal, provincial, institutional, and professional guidelines. These obligations arise in the design and conduct of the research, collection and interpretation of the resulting data, confidentiality of records, publication of the

results, management of intellectual property emanating from the research, and relationships between the research team and the financial sponsors.

#### A. Research team

Members must:

- openly discuss the roles of individuals in the research team, as well as responsibilities and expectations for these individuals;
- discuss changes in roles or expectations and deal with these changes in an open and respectful manner;
- ensure that all data collected during a study are real and that the results are not fabricated, falsified, or plagiarized;
- ensure that experiments are adequately powered to support the conclusions;
- respect the confidentiality of research data; and
- obtain consent of the research team members prior to initiating processes for disclosure or dissemination of data to others.

#### B. Research involving human participants

Members must:

- seek approval from the appropriate institutional review board for research performed with human participants;
- adhere to the applicable institutional rules for such research, such as but not limited to the Helsinki Declaration [2] and the Belmont Report [3]; and
- protect the rights and welfare of the human subjects.

#### C. Research involving animal participants

Members must:

- seek approval from the appropriate institutional animal care and use committee for research performed with animals;
- adhere to the Principles of Humane Experimental Technique [4]; and
- treat animal subjects humanely and with consideration for all aspects of their welfare.

#### D. Publication ethics

Members who find themselves involved in any aspect of publishing (such as commercial, newsletter, editorial, or academic, etc.; as authors, reviewers, or editors) are expected to represent themselves and their subject matter with honesty and transparency.

When Members are listing their published work, transparency requires disclosure of the existence and nature of the review process for the published work.

##### a. *Authorship:*

- Members must adhere to the requirements of the publication to which they are submitting. Members should reserve authorship only for those who:
  - have contributed substantially to the conception and design, and/or acquisition of data, and/or analysis and interpretation of data;
  - were directly involved in the drafting and/or revising of the publication; and
  - have given final approval of the version to be submitted for review.
- Members must not plagiarize the work of others.

- Members must not self-plagiarize, or submit for publication with substantially similar material to two or more journals, unless the manuscript was rejected or the editors of all involved journals grant permission.
- Members should respect the peer review process by considering the concerns raised by previous reviewers before resubmitting their manuscript to another journal.

*b. Declaration of interests:*

Members must explicitly declare all financial interests with respect to business or corporate entities when submitting manuscripts or giving presentations, even if such arrangements are tangential to the subject matter of the work. Such financial interests may include sponsorship, travel reimbursement, performance-based bonus incentives, or stock ownership.

*c. Editorship and peer review:*

- Members acting as editors or reviewers:
  - should be aware of potential bias or conflict of interest and strive to deliver an impartial assessment of the work based on merit alone;
  - must declare and manage any conflicts of interest that could compromise their objectivity;
  - should ensure that the peer review process is objective, fair, and confidential;
  - are responsible for maintaining the dialogue, and any communication among participants, at a professional and respectful level throughout the review process;
  - must not use the unpublished results to benefit their own work or advancement; and
  - must not prevent publication of results in order to benefit their own work or advancement.
- Members acting as editors of non-peer reviewed publications must not knowingly publish falsified or plagiarized data.

**E. Intellectual property**

Intellectual property describes the set of tangible and intangible assets owned by a person, company, or agency, and consists of patents, trade secrets, copyrights, trademarks, industrial designs, algorithms, source code, know-how, or simply ideas.

Creative influence is the cornerstone of creativity and innovation. Without the appropriate citation or acknowledgment of the work of others, imitation of the work of others can result in plagiarism. All forms of plagiarism, including self-plagiarism, are dishonest and must be avoided.

Members must:

- be respectful and follow confidentiality agreements that protect intellectual property;
- be forthright in their reporting of public disclosures;
- abide by the contracts under which they developed intellectual property;
- properly designate all inventors when registering intellectual property; and
- provide truthful information on the associated patent applications.

**IV. Education ethics**

Formal and informal educational settings present an environment in which the student or trainee will have the opportunity to absorb the intellectual and ethical atmosphere of the institution and its educators. It is therefore of paramount importance that educators exhibit the highest ethical standards and that students or trainees begin the practice of ethical behaviour that will guide

them for the remainder of their careers. In this Education Ethics section, the following definitions apply:

- "Student or Trainee" refers to a person engaged in any educational or training program.
- "Educator" refers to any person responsible for the education or supervision of a Student or Trainee.

#### A. Educators

Educators have an obligation to contribute to the intellectual development of Students or Trainees and to support them in achieving their educational goals. They must guide Students or Trainees toward an efficient path to reaching these goals. Students or Trainees entrust their educational outcome in their Educators, advisers, and mentors.

*a. Safe environment:* Educators must promote a safe environment for learning and must educate Students or Trainees regarding the hazards and methods to control and minimize potential risks.

*b. Respect for Students or Trainees:* Educators must interact with Students or Trainees in a supportive manner. Their verbal, nonverbal, and written communication with Students or Trainees should be constructive and reasoned, having the intent to enhance the education experience. Educators must support all Students' or Trainees' participation and foster an environment conducive to freedom of expression. Educators must give appropriate credit to Students or Trainees for their work and involvement in academic, research, or clinical accomplishments.

*c. Equal opportunity:* Educators must fairly consider all Students or Trainees for participation in any program or for any benefits that may aid the Student or Trainee, including, but not limited to, attendance at scientific meetings or training programs, research projects, internships, and scholarships. Consideration must be free of discrimination and opportunities should be awarded based on academic and professional merit alone.

*d. Student or Trainee confidentiality:* Educators must maintain appropriate confidentiality of Student or Trainee information, whether verbal or written.

*e. Intimate relationships between Educators and Students or Trainees:* Educators are accountable for ensuring that effective and appropriate relationships are maintained or managed so as not to impair objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing their function as Educators. This may involve disclosure of the relationship, re-arrangement of roles and responsibilities, or other steps. Educators should bear in mind that an intimate relationship with their Students or Trainees presents a conflict of interest.

*f. Student or Trainee program completion:*

- Educators should encourage Students or Trainees to excel and provide the support necessary for successful completion of their program of study.
- Educators must document the Students' or Trainees' performance to support any decision for delay or failure for timely completion of the program as they are accountable for their progress.
- Educators must make fair evaluations of Students' or Trainees' efforts and document those evaluations in the Students' or Trainees' record when appropriate.
- The overall progress or advancement of the Students or Trainees supersedes any personal interest of the Educator or learning institution.

## B. Students or Trainees

Students or Trainees in an educational or training program are in the privileged position of being supported in their professional and personal growth. To support their own success, they must be their own advocates and act with integrity and respect toward their Educators and their learning institution.

*a. Respect for Educators and fellow Students or Trainees:* Students or Trainees must interact in a respectful manner to promote an educational environment conducive to freedom of expression and equal participation.

*b. Respect for institutional property:* Students or Trainees must obtain permission to use an Educator's or institution's information, data, or intellectual or physical property for their personal or professional use.

*c. Acknowledgment of the work of others:* Students or Trainees must represent their work truthfully by acknowledging outside contributions.

*d. Intimate relationships between Students or Trainees and Educators:* Students or Trainees should bear in mind that an intimate relationship with their Educators presents a conflict of interest.

## V. Business/Government ethics

Professional advancement often requires Members to change employers or collaborators. These include large and small private corporations, government organizations and agencies, and academic institutions. Members may also act as entrepreneurs or be self-employed. The processes that Members engage in while navigating their professional paths must be governed by ethical personal and professional behaviour.

### A. Employment ethics

*a. Seeking or changing jobs:* When seeking employment, Members must:

- act with respect and consideration for any existing parties and of their relationship(s) with the potential employer when considering a potential job opportunity;
- not intentionally undermine the employment of another person;
- seek positions only with the reasonable expectation of accepting a satisfactory offer, should one be made; and
- respond to and negotiate any offers made within a mutually agreed upon time frame.

Members should honour the mutual commitments they have made under the terms of their agreement once accepting an offer for employment.

*b. Vacating a position:* Members are expected to give appropriate notice when vacating a position. Members must leave all information for which compensation was made and must make a reasonable effort to facilitate an orderly transition of services upon leaving a position. Documentation must be left in an intelligible, legible order, in hard copy or digital format. All materials generated, as well as any related notes derived from that work may be the property of the paying entity. If that is the case, such materials must be left in the possession of the organization's management, unless other arrangements have been mutually agreed upon by all parties. Members must disclose any ongoing regulatory violations or investigations pertaining to the position and be forthcoming with pertinent details.

*c. Relationship with recruiters:* Members who are job candidates must communicate with recruiters openly, honestly, and with transparency.

Members who are recruiters must:

- faithfully and honestly represent job candidates to employers and employers to job candidates;
- receive permission from a job candidate for release of their resume (curriculum vitae) to each and every potential employer client; and
- maintain the confidentiality of a job search in each and every instance unless specifically released in writing from such confidentiality by the job candidate.

*d. Hiring employees:* Members who are employers must:

- faithfully and honestly represent open positions;
- disclose pertinent information regarding open positions; and
- be open and honest about their requirements and expectations.

Confidentiality of the candidate must be respected. Members who are employers extending offers must provide the candidate a reasonable and clear amount of time to respond. By extending an offer, employers must suspend their recruitment activities by withholding offers to any competing candidates until their business with the first candidate is completed. Employers must honour the terms of the agreement once an offer is accepted.

B. Member interactions with vendors

*a. Purchasing of equipment or services:* Members must base the purchase of a product or service on its merits and not be influenced by personal inducements.

Consultation arrangements, gifts, grants, or other considerations in exchange for a sales transaction, constitute an inducement or the appearance of an inducement. Participation in such arrangements is unethical. Members must avoid being a party to such exchanges.

*b. Accepting gifts from vendors:* Promotional items, educational items, and modest gifts of a nominal value may be offered by a vendor and accepted by a Member as a courtesy of business. Members must be conscious of the potential appearance of their actions.

Where legal or other restrictions on such exchanges exist within an organization that the Member represents (including government agencies), the Member must be aware of them and comply fully.

*c. Respecting proprietary information:* Members must respect and hold confidential any corporate proprietary information.

Where a formal nondisclosure agreement is in place, the Member must honour it.

*d. Sponsorship of investigator research:* Members must keep discussions for funding of research separate from discussions for purchase of services or equipment so that there is no real or perceived bias in obtaining research funds or making purchase decisions. Sponsorship of research must be acknowledged and disclosed in presentations and publications.

*e. Contracted work arrangements between vendors and Members:* Members entering into business agreements with vendors must delineate the scope and deliverable(s) of the work. Compensation (including honouraria) must be based on fair value for the work contracted.

Members must disclose affiliations and sponsorships when presenting or reporting on behalf of a vendor or agency. Any claims about a product must be objective and supported with data. The Member should make the extent of their involvement with the product or project clear.

*f. Releasing patient information:* Members must avoid disclosing identifiable patient information to vendors or agencies. Members must ensure compliance with patient privacy laws. Members must disclose when confidential patient information has not been removed prior to disseminating information.

#### C. COMP Affiliate Members and Members employed by vendors

*a. Offering gifts:* COMP Affiliate Members and Members involved in selling products must avoid offering consultation arrangements, gifts, or grants to an individual or organization that could be considered inducements to purchase a particular product. Industry codes of ethics (e.g. ADVAMed [5]) should be carefully reviewed by Corporate Affiliates and Members for additional guidance.

When discussing products, COMP Affiliate Members and Members should strive to be objective and to be able to support product claims with data.

*b. Product or service marketing:* COMP Affiliate Members and Members must truthfully describe the product or service when engaging in sales communications and advertisements. They must honestly represent the performance of the product or service, including any known deficiencies. If a product is in development or not yet ready for clinical use, that information must be clearly stated.

*c. Sponsorship of research:* COMP Affiliate Members and Members involved in the sponsorship of external investigator research must keep discussions about research and educational grants separate from purchase of equipment or services. All grant submissions must be treated with an equal review process, independent from considerations of sales deals or other business transactions.

#### D. Members who are self-employed

In this Ethics of Self-Employment section, the following definitions apply:

- “Self-employment” refers broadly to all forms of employment or provision of services in which the Member has an ownership stake. In most cases the self-employed Member will do business as either a Contractor or a Consultant.
- “Contractor” refers to a Member who enters into a formal or informal arrangement with a client to provide routine services to the client in exchange for compensation. In this capacity the Contractor, as well as any employee(s) of the Contractor, interacts in the workplace in a way that is functionally identical to an employee of the client and all of the guidance relevant to employed practice in this Code applies.
- “Consultant” refers to a Member who provides a client with domain expertise and advice in exchange for compensation. Typically, Consultants are engaged by an organization to provide expert guidance in the making of decisions that can have broad impact on the structure, investments, and strategic priorities of the organization.

##### *a. Contractor ethics:* The Contractor:

- should establish in cooperation with the client a framework for assuring that all contracted work is performed in a manner consistent with the client's employee policies and practices; and
- bears responsibility to establish formal means for avoiding conflicts of interest that might arise as a consequence of the Contractor's relationship with individuals or organizations with which the client may also have a relationship.

*b. Consultant ethics: The Consultant:*

- bears responsibility to provide professional objectivity to the client; and
- should be cognizant of the context in which a consultation is requested and take all necessary precautions in rendering advice that is in line with the Principles outlined in this Code of Ethics.

*c. Moonlighting:* Moonlighting, which is the practice of contracting for services while simultaneously holding a position as an employee of a different agency or company, presents an additional layer of ethical challenge. It is important to closely examine both actual and perceived conflicts of interest, as well as manage the practical limitations of available resources such as time and attention.

Moonlighting Members are expected to adhere to the employer restrictions if these have been explicitly stated in a contractual agreement.

*d. Seeking and fulfilling contracts for self-employment:*

- I. **Personal behaviour:** Members must respect the client policies that govern employee conduct at any facility or institute they may visit or where they may do business. They must respect the client's code of ethics and personnel policies while on the premises and in any business dealings.

Members must communicate and collaborate respectfully with employees of a particular facility. They should be forthcoming with data and reports regarding the work performed.

Members must accurately and respectfully reflect the work product of others in the course of providing contract services.

When approaching new clients, Members must consider the impact their solicitation may have on other contracted or employed physicists. To the extent feasible and when warranted, direct respectful communication with an incumbent who might be displaced should be made in a timely manner.

- II. **Advertising of business:** Members must represent faithfully and honestly their business and the abilities of any employed staff in any advertisement. They must be forthcoming regarding known limitations of their expertise and resources.
- III. **Hiring and recruiting:** Members who hire others (including other medical physicists) to fulfill private contracts must be mindful of guidance elsewhere in this document regarding hiring and recruiting practices.
- IV. **Training:** Members who hire others to fulfill private contracts must take responsibility for providing adequate training, supervision, and mentoring of their employees, especially those early in their careers.
- V. **Communication:** Clear communication is essential to providing high quality patient care. Members must communicate their work in a clear, concise, complete, and legible manner to their clients, so that the clients may successfully address clinical and regulatory needs.



- VI. Completion of work: Members who perform any work (including equipment inspections) under contract must provide truthful data and conclusions. It is imperative for the safety of patients that true, accurate results are presented to clients.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF USE OF AAPM CODE**

This document is based on Skourou et al., "Code of Ethics for the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (Revised): Report of Task Group 109," *Med Phys* 46 (4), e79-e93, 2019, with substantial portions adopted verbatim, with permission.

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