

Virtual Mentor

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AMA CODE SAYS

AMA Code of Medical Ethics Available Online

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As stewards of the process by which the 150-plus-year-old *Code* is revised and updated, the Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs recognizes its important role in the adjudication of ethical and legal issues by professional boards and courts of law across the nation. Ironically, many members of the profession by and for whom the *Code* was developed view it as an historical artifact rather than as a living document and practical guide for day-to-day decision making. The challenge today is—as it was 100 years ago—to promote the *Code* as a viable compendium of guidelines that can help physicians recognize, analyze, and resolve ethical and professional dilemmas that arise in patient care and clinical research.

A new means for accomplishing this goal is the Internet. The entire *Code* is now publicly available online at the AMA web site. The annotated version (with legal references citing the use of the *Code* in US jurisdictions) is the accepted reference for nearly all states and licensure authorities and is available for purchase from AMA.

Since the *Code* sets the standard for professional conduct of US physicians, medical students and doctors should know how to access it and become familiar with its content. Organized medicine and academic institutions should work together to find cost effective means for increasing awareness of the *Code* by medical students and physicians.

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