



Code of Ethics of the American Academy of Ophthalmology

Pertinent Principles and Rules of the Code of Ethics related to
Conflict of Interest

Preamble

The Code of Ethics of the American Academy of Ophthalmology applies to the American Academy of Ophthalmology and to its Fellows and Members in any class of membership, and is enforceable by the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

A. Principles of Ethics

The Principles of Ethics form the first part of this Code of Ethics. They are aspirational and inspirational model standards of exemplary professional conduct for all Fellows or Members of the Academy in any class of membership. They serve as goals for which Academy Fellows and Members should constantly strive. The Principles of Ethics are not enforceable.

1. Ethics in Ophthalmology. Ethics address conduct and relate to what behavior is appropriate or inappropriate, as reasonably determined by the entity setting the ethical standards. An issue of ethics in ophthalmology is resolved by the determination that the best interests of patients are served.

2. Providing Ophthalmological Services. Ophthalmological services must be provided with compassion, respect for human dignity, honesty and integrity.

5. Fees for Ophthalmological Services. Fees for ophthalmological services must not exploit patients or others who pay for the services.

7. An Ophthalmologist's Responsibility. It is the responsibility of an ophthalmologist to act in the best interest of the patient.

B. Rules of Ethics

The Rules of Ethics form the second part of this Code of Ethics. They are mandatory and descriptive standards of minimally-acceptable professional conduct for all Fellows or Members of the Academy in any class of membership. The Rules of Ethics are enforceable.

2. Informed Consent. The performance of medical or surgical procedures shall be preceded by appropriate informed consent. When obtaining informed consent, pertinent medical facts and recommendations consistent with good medical practice must be presented in understandable terms to the patient or to the person responsible for the patient. Such information should include alternative modes of treatment, the objectives, risks, and possible complications of such a treatment, and the consequences of no treatment. The operating ophthalmologist must personally confirm with the patient or patient surrogate their (his or her) comprehension of this information.

9. Medical and Surgical Procedures. An ophthalmologist must not misrepresent the service that is performed or the charges made for that service. An ophthalmologist must not inappropriately alter the medical record.

11. Commercial Relationships. An ophthalmologist's clinical judgment and practice must not be affected by economic interest in, commitment to, or benefit from professionally-related commercial enterprises.

15. Conflict of Interest. A conflict of interest exists when professional judgment concerning the well- being of the patient has a reasonable chance of being influenced by other interests of the provider. Disclosure of a conflict of interest is required in communications to patients, the public, and colleagues.

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