

Code of Ethics - Detailed

College of Pharmacists of British Columbia

Responsibility to Patients

Standard 1: Registrants Protect and Promote the Health and Well-Being of Patients

Guidelines for Application

- (a) Registrants are committed first and foremost to protecting and promoting the health and well-being* of their patients.
- (b) Registrants practice only within the scope of their education, training and competence.
- (c) Registrants are aware of the limitations of their knowledge and expertise and refer as necessary and appropriate.
- (d) Registrants are knowledgeable of, and adhere to, national and provincial legislation, standards of practice and policies relevant to the practice of pharmacy.
- (e) Registrants maintain appropriate resources to facilitate their efforts to deliver services according to the standards of practice.
- (f) Registrants dispense, distribute, recommend and advertise drugs and health-related products that are approved by Health Canada.
- (g) Registrants must provide pharmacy services requested by patients and may only refuse to provide these services for any of the following reasons:
 - i. the drug or product requested is not available
 - ii. the registrant does not possess the knowledge, skills and abilities to provide the service or product
 - iii. the provision of the product or service is contrary to the sincerely held conscientious or religious belief of a registrant, in which case the registrant must ensure that:
 - o they have informed and explained to the pharmacy manager and employer of their conscientious or religious belief before they accept employment;
 - o if the belief is formed after employment is accepted, they inform the pharmacy manager and employer at the earliest opportunity;
 - o they do not discuss their personal beliefs or ask patients to disclose or justify their own beliefs;
 - o they participate in a process designed to exercise their freedom of conscience and religion in a manner that respects the patient's right to receive products and services in a timely manner and in a way that minimizes suffering and hardship to the patient;

- they fulfill their duty of care to the patient in a manner that is non-judgmental, continuous and non-discriminatory;
 - in the event of failure of the system developed to ensure the timely delivery of the product or service, and notwithstanding the registrant's conscientious or religious beliefs, they provide patients with enough information and assistance to allow them to make informed choices for themselves;
 - they cooperate in effective transfers of care initiated by the patient and are not required to make a referral; and
 - they do not rely on conscientious or religious beliefs in order to discriminate against any patient on morally irrelevant grounds including those outlined in *Standard 3, Guideline g* of this Code.
- iv. the patient is unable or unwilling to provide payment for the requested pharmacy service or product
- v. the patient is abusive physically or mentally to the registrant
- (h) Registrants must provide essential pharmacy care throughout the duration of any job action or pharmacy closure.
- (i) In the event of either a patient emergency or a public emergency, registrants take appropriate action to provide care within their professional competence and experience.

Standard 2: Registrants Act in the Best Interests of their Patients In Achieving their Chosen Health Outcome

Guidelines for Application

- a) Registrants utilize their professional judgment to act in the best interests of their patients in achieving their chosen health outcome.
- b) Pharmacists support patients in making informed choices about their care by explaining the benefits and risks associated with medication therapy.
- c) Pharmacists provide information that is evidence based, relevant, up-to-date and consistent with the standard of care.
- d) Registrants provide information in an understandable and sensitive manner and respond to patients' questions.
- e) Registrants respect their patient's right to accept or refuse any drug or health product related recommendation.
- f) Registrants ensure that they obtain the patient's informed, implied or expressed and voluntary consent prior to the provision of pharmacy services.
- g) Registrants recognize and respect the autonomy of a competent minor to provide informed consent and make decisions about their healthcare.
- h) Registrants recognize and respect persons authorized either through personal directives or proxy designations to act as surrogate decision-makers in the case of incompetent patients.

Standard 3: Registrants Practice Respect for Patients

Guidelines for Application

- a) Registrants respect the value and dignity of patients.
- b) Registrants respect the patient's autonomy and freedom to make an informed decision.
- c) Registrants recognize the power imbalance inherent in professional relationships (registrant-patient relationship) and maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- d) Registrants act in the best interests of their patients and do not exploit the professional relationship for any personal, physical, emotional, financial, social or sexual gain.
- e) Registrants treat patients with sensitivity, caring, courtesy and respect.
- f) Registrants provide pharmacy care that is respectful of the values, customs and beliefs of patients.
- g) Registrants ensure that their personal beliefs and values do not prejudice patient care and do not engage in discrimination based on age, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, lifestyle, disability, socio-economic status or any basis proscribed by law.

Standard 4: Registrants Protect the Right to Confidentiality of their Patients

Guidelines for Application

- a) Registrants respect their patient's right to privacy and confidentiality.
- b) Registrants do their utmost to protect patient confidentiality when they share patient information with colleagues or other healthcare professionals.
- c) Registrants do not disclose confidential information without the consent of the patient, unless provided for by law or by the need to protect the welfare of the individual or the public interest.
- d) Registrants maintain confidentiality in creating, storing, accessing, transferring and disposing of records they control.

Standard 5: Registrants Participate in Ethically Valid Research

Guidelines for Application

- a) Registrants ensure that any research they participate in is evaluated both ethically and scientifically and is approved by a research ethics board that meets applicable standards recognized by [National Council on Ethics and Human Research \(NCEHR\)](http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/policy-politique/tcps-eptc/docs/TCPS%20October%202005_E.pdf) requirements for research involving human participants. (http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/policy-politique/tcps-eptc/docs/TCPS%20October%202005_E.pdf)
- b) Registrants ensure that before proceeding with their research study they have obtained the informed consent of the patient or proxy and advised the patient that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.
- c) Registrants inform the patient of the purpose of the study, its source of funding, the risks of harm and benefits, and the nature of their participation including any applicable compensation.
- d) Registrants ensure that they inform research participants that all participant information will be kept confidential and not disclosed without the participants approval and consent.

Responsibility to Society

Standard 6: Registrants are Committed to Benefiting Society

Guidelines for Application

- a) Registrants have an ethical duty to uphold public trust and confidence in the profession by acting with honesty and integrity.
- b) Registrants have a responsibility to report incompetent or unethical behavior by colleagues or other healthcare professionals to the appropriate regulatory authority.
- c) Registrants recognize the professions' responsibility to society to participate in*:
 - i. advocacy
 - ii. research
 - iii. public education programs
- d) Registrants endeavor to advance the quality of pharmacy services and care provided to the public
- e) Registrants contribute to the future of the profession by participating in student, intern and resident education including multidisciplinary and collaborative experiences as appropriate.
- f) Registrants ensure that they maintain appropriate professional boundaries in pharmacy student/instructor and supervisor/subordinate relationships.
- g) Registrants recognize the responsibility of the profession to provide access to pharmacy services and resources.
- h) Registrants have a responsibility for ensuring the provision of cost-effective pharmacy services in overall healthcare delivery.
- i) Registrants provide safe disposal of drugs and health related products and support environmentally friendly practices.

*It is understood that this is not an obligation of all individual registrants but rather a responsibility of the profession as a whole.

Responsibility to the Profession

Standard 7: Registrants are Committed to Personal and Professional Integrity

Guidelines for Application

- a) Registrants have an ethical duty to act conscientiously and avoid unethical behavior.
- b) Registrants act with honesty and integrity in all professional relationships and fulfill their responsibilities as described in the Code of Ethics and companion documents: Conflict of Interest Standards and Patient Relations Program.
- c) Registrants uphold the spirit of the Code of Ethics and its intent as well as its written articulation.
- d) Registrants comply with legislation, standards of practice and accepted best practice guidelines.
- e) Registrants do not justify unethical behavior by rationalizing that such behavior is not explicitly captured in a standard or guideline and therefore ethically permissible.
- f) Registrants shall resist any influence or interference that could undermine their professional integrity.
- g) Registrants have a responsibility to protect and maintain their physical and mental health and well-being and seek care and support as appropriate.
- h) Registrants must discontinue the provision of professional services if their physical or mental health poses a risk of harm.
- i) Registrants take appropriate steps to prevent and report the misuse or abuse of substances by patients, colleagues, other healthcare professionals or other pharmacy employees.
- j) Registrants recognize that professional obligations override management policies, and take all reasonable steps to resolve situations where management policies and professional obligations are in conflict.
- k) Registrants report any policies, systems or working conditions to the College that pose a risk of harm to the public.
- l) Registrants cooperate with investigations into their own or another healthcare professionals' fitness to practice and abide by undertakings or limitations and conditions placed on their practice.
- m) Registrants enter only into relationships, contracts and agreements in which they can maintain their professional integrity and safeguard the interests of their patients.

Standard 8: Registrants are Sensitive to and Avoid Conflict of Interest

Guidelines for Application

- a) Registrants must consider first the health and well-being of the patient and avoid situations that are, or may reasonably be perceived to be, a conflict of interest.
- b) Registrants abide by and conscientiously follow the Code of Ethics companion document, Conflict of Interest Standards.
- c) Registrants inform relevant parties, if they are involved in a real, perceived, or potential, conflict of interest scenario and resolve the situation as outlined in the Conflict of Interest Standards.
- d) Registrants avoid dual or multiple relationships and other situations which may present a conflict of interest and potentially reduce their ability to be objective and unbiased in their professional judgment.

Standard 9: Registrants Participate in Ethical Business Practices

Guidelines for Application

- a) Registrants do not participate in, condone, or are associated with dishonesty, fraud, misrepresentation or any other kind of unethical or illegal behavior.
- b) Registrants do not make false, deceptive or fraudulent statements concerning their training, experience, competence, academic degrees or credentials, affiliations, services, research, fees, etc.
- c) Registrants conform to legal and professional norms that support the integrity and dignity of the profession.
- d) Registrants use only truthful, accurate, fully informative and non-deceptive information in their marketing and public education programs.
- e) Registrants do not make false claims for any purpose.
- f) Registrants are transparent in the fees they charge, consider the ability of the patient to pay and discuss options with the patient.
- g) Registrants ensure that any comparison to the business services of competitors is fair and accurate.
- h) Registrants only enter relationships with industry which are appropriate and in compliance with the Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Standards and maintain the integrity of the fiduciary relationship between the registrant and the patient.
- i) Registrants refrain from participating in activities that could undermine patient trust in registrants and society's trust in the pharmacy profession.

Standard 10: Registrants are Committed to Professional Development

Guidelines for Application

- a) Registrants keep up to date with new pharmacy knowledge and practices by participating in continuous lifelong learning.
- b) Registrants participate in continuous evaluations of their practice and are responsive to the outcomes of evaluations and reviews by undertaking constructive change or further training if necessary.
- c) Registrants endeavour to advance the knowledge and skills of the profession and make relevant information available to patients, colleagues and the public.
- d) Registrants participate in professional development opportunities that support learning in professional ethics and the development of sound professional judgment in ethical decision making.
- e) Registrants develop, promote and participate in quality assurance and accountability processes.