

Ministerial Resolution No. (1448) of 2017

On Adoption of Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Health Professionals

The Minister of Health and Prevention:

- After perusal of Federal Law No. (1) of 1972 on the Jurisdictions of the Ministries and the Competences of the Ministers, and its amendments;
- Federal Law No. (7) of 1975 on the Practice Of Human Medicine Profession, and its amendments;
- Federal Law No. (4) of 1983 on Pharmaceutical Profession and Establishments;
- Federal Law No. (4) of 2016 on Medical Liability;
- Cabinet Resolution No. (6) of 2013 on Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Health;
- Cabinet Resolution No. (7) of 2016 Vesting Certain Powers in Certain Ministers;
- And according to the requirements of the public interest;

Decided the following:

Article (1): The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Health Professionals attached to this Decision shall be adopted.

Article (2): All violations related to the attached Code shall be referred to the relevant Licensing Committee at the Ministry investigate the violating practices and take the necessary actions accordingly.

Article (3): This Resolution shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall come into force as of the date of its publication.

Abdul Rahman bin Mohammed Al Owais

Minister of Health and Prevention

Promulgated on: 25/12/2017 A.D.

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Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Health Professionals

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General Rules

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1. This Code shall be implemented in accordance with the legislation in force in the United Arab Emirates.
2. A license to practice the health profession in the Country must be obtained from the Competent Health Authority.
3. Health professional should be familiar with the Health Professional Licensing Requirements document used throughout the UAE for evaluation of health professionals.
4. Health professional should be familiar with all federal and local laws that govern health practice in the UAE and in all authorities.
5. Health professional must be qualified to practice and with a record free of any misconduct or ethical issues, in order to obtain a work permit within the UAE.

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Ethical Values and Standards

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All health professionals must comply with the fundamental ethical values and standards to maintain quality professional practice. These fundamental ethical values and standards include:

1. **Respect for people:** Health professionals should respect the service recipients as people, and must respect their worth, dignity, and sense of value.
2. **No abuse: To take into account the interest and well-being of service recipients:** Health professionals should not cause any damage to or act against the interest of the service recipients, even when the interests of the service recipients conflict with their personal interests.
3. **Good treatment:** The health professionals' behavior towards service recipients should be friendly, even when the interests of the service recipients conflict with their personal interests.
4. **Human rights:** Health professionals should be aware of and take into account human rights when performing their duties.
5. **Freedom of choice:** Health professionals should respect the service recipients' right of independency and their right to make their own informed choices, and to live their lives according to their own beliefs, values and preferences.
6. **Integrity and impartiality:** Health professionals should perform their duties with integrity and impartiality, and should observe these values when dealing with health service recipients.
7. **Honesty:** Health professionals should adopt frankness and honesty as the basis of trust in their professional relationships with service recipients.
8. **Confidentiality:** During their professional relations with service recipients, health professionals should deal with personal or private information as confidential in accordance with the regulating legislation.
9. **Empathy:** Health professionals should be sensitive to the individual and social needs of health service recipients, and should create mechanisms to provide comfort and support whenever appropriate and possible.
10. **Tolerance and kindness:** Health professionals should respect the rights of people to have different moral beliefs, which may arise from strong personal, religious or cultural convictions, and to endure the behavior of service recipients and seek excuses for harassment from some of them out of their pain and illness.
11. **Equality:** Health professionals should treat all individuals and groups in a fair, equitable and impartial manner.
12. **Professional competence and self-development:** Health professionals should continuously strive to obtain the highest level of knowledge and skills required in their field of work.
13. **Society promotion:** Health professionals should strive to contribute to the promotion of society according to their professional capabilities and their position in society.

The responsibilities of health professionals are divided into four main areas:

1. Responsibility towards service recipients;
2. Self-Responsibility;
3. Responsibility towards colleagues; and
4. Responsibility towards society.

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1. Responsibility towards Service Recipients

1.1 Keeness on the Service Recipient's Interest and Welfare

Health professionals should comply with the following:

- 1.1.1 Medical examinations, prescriptions, or surgical procedures are limited to the extent necessary for the case of service recipient.
- 1.1.2 Do not use unrecognized or scientifically unproven diagnostic or therapeutic procedures, unless they are within the framework of known scientific controls and to the extent necessary for the case of service recipients, taking into account the legislative and regulatory controls in force in the Country.
- 1.1.3 Listen carefully to the complaints of service recipients and sympathize with their suffering.
- 1.1.4 Alleviate the physical and psychological suffering of service recipients as much as possible by all available material and psychological means, so as that the service recipient feels satisfied.
- 1.1.5 Inform the service recipient or the person acting on his/her behalf, as soon as possible, about the health condition, its causes, and possible complications, in addition to the diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. Service recipient should also be informed of appropriate alternatives of diagnosis and therapy, in a clear and honest manner, in accordance with the legislation in force in the Country.
- 1.1.6 Be prudent when asking questions to service recipients about their health condition, through choosing words that are most appropriate to the situation, which do not embarrass the service recipient, unless necessary, especially in the presence of other individuals or other service recipients.
- 1.1.7 Refer any service recipient to any other specialized physician when the service recipient's health condition is not within his competence or if the other physician has more effective treatment methods. The physician should not delay this referral whenever the interest of the service recipient so requires, while providing the necessary information for the treatment of the service recipient.
- 1.1.8 Continue providing proper health care to service recipients during their illness period, regardless of its duration.
- 1.1.9 Clearly inform service recipients about their health condition, in addition to how to preserve their health, with methods and methods of preventing diseases or reducing their complications.
- 1.1.10 Clearly notify service recipients if they are undergoing treatment in an educational institution that they will be examined/treated by a trained physician. Service recipient should be aware that the trainees are under the supervision of a consultant or specialist physician who will eventually be responsible for the provision of the medical service. Service recipient has the right to agree or refuse this.

1.2 Respecting Service Recipients

Health professionals should comply with the following:

- 1.2.1 Respect the privacy and dignity of service recipients;

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- 1.2.2 Deal with service recipients in a courteous manner and pay due attention to their condition;
- 1.2.3 Respect the views of service recipients and understand their traditions and social norms, especially with regard to personal relationships; however, this does not mean that they are not adequately advised;
- 1.2.4 Respect service recipients' desire to be referred to another health care professional or to obtain medical reports explaining their health condition. Health professional should not refrain from meeting the desires of service recipients and should facilitate their access to such reports and information;
- 1.2.5 Respect the times set for service recipients without delay;
- 1.2.6 Protect service recipients from any human rights violations and do not allow, participate in, or ignore any acts that lead to violating the rights of service recipients.

1.3 Informed Consent

Health professionals should comply with the following:

- 1.3.1 Provide service recipients with sufficient information in an easy-to-understand language, explain the procedures to be taken by the health professional and the procedures required by service recipients, and inform service recipients of the potential consequences of their decisions, in addition to the potential complications and risks;
- 1.3.2 Provide service recipients with the chance to understand and evaluate the information provided to them so that they can make decisions with full awareness and conviction;
- 1.3.3 Ensure that the consent of service recipients is given voluntarily without any coercion or pressure;
- 1.3.4 Refrain from preventing service recipients from obtaining any information, examinations, treatments, or procedures that the health professional is aware that they are in the interest of service recipients.

1.4 Reassuring Service Recipients

Health professionals should comply with the following:

- 1.4.1 Identify and explore the psychological needs of service recipients;
- 1.4.2 Provide service recipients with sufficient and clear information about their condition, which helps to reassure them and eliminate their fears;
- 1.4.3 Give service recipients sufficient time to understand the facts said to them and allow them to express their feelings towards the illness or treatment without rush;
- 1.4.4 Deal with the feelings and concerns of service recipients positively and correct their misconceptions and misinformation about their illness and treatment;
- 1.4.5 Reassure service recipients and inform them of that they are taken care of and supported, and this should continue throughout all stages of their disease, even in terminal illness. Service professionals should reassure service recipients when there is any sudden bad news;

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- 1.4.5.1 Communicate with service recipients and prepare them psychologically to receive unexpected or unpleasant news;
- 1.4.5.2 Only inform service recipients of information that suits their level of knowledge and understanding of their health condition without going into details that may increase their anxiety or confusion;
- 1.4.5.3 Choose the appropriate time and place to inform service recipients of any bad news, preferably when they are psychologically and physically stable and ready to receive such news. It is also preferable to inform persons whom service recipients trust after obtaining their consent, which eases the job of the treating physician in informing service recipients of any bad news;
- 1.4.5.4 Give sufficient time and pay due attention when informing service recipients of any bad news so that the physician can provide the news calmly, using effective communication skills;
- 1.4.5.5 Continue to alleviate the physical and psychological suffering of service recipients and provide them with the required care. Service recipients should not be left or ignored so that they do not have the feeling that the physician has lost hope in treating their condition;
- 1.4.5.6 Physician should assess whether it is better to inform service recipients of part of the truth or to disclose the information to service recipients' families only if it is in the interest of service recipients;
- 1.4.5.7 Physicians and health professionals should receive adequate training in effective communication skills so that they will be able to deal with such cases;
- 1.4.5.8 Refrain from informing service recipients of any information that they are not authorized to disclose.

1.5 Confidentiality of Service Recipients' Information

Health professionals should comply with the following:

- 1.5.1 Recognize the right of service recipients to expect that health professionals would not disclose any personal and confidential information they access in the course of performing their professional duties, unless service recipients agrees to that disclosure or the health professionals have a valid and compelling reason to do so (for example, if they do not disclose such information, a potential serious harm might happen to a third party, or when there is a public health emergency or any compelling and morally justifiable legal requirement);
- 1.5.2 Disclose the information to service recipients' family or any other persons if such disclosure is useful for the treatment after seeking the consent of service recipients;
- 1.5.3 Disclose some secrets of service recipients in case it is necessary to educate the rest of the health care team, which should be for educational purposes only. Health professionals should refrain from any disclosure that might lead to the identification or service recipients;

1.6 Access to Health Care

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- 1.6.1 Access to health care should be enhanced; if one of the services is not available in the health facility, the health professional should refer service recipients to another health care professional or another health facility in which the required service is available, provided that practitioners are obligated in emergency cases to provide the necessary care to ensure the stability of service recipients and then take the necessary measures to ensure referring service recipients to a practitioner or other health facility.

1.7 Conflict of Interest

- 1.7.1 Health professionals should always prioritize examining and treating service recipients, as their health condition requires;
- 1.7.2 Stop over-servicing: Service recipients should be advised or referred to conduct the necessary examinations and treatment only. Treatment, medicines or devices should be prescribed within the limits of the needs of service recipients only, without being linked to achieving a personal interest or financial gain for the benefit of the health professional;
- 1.7.3 It is strictly forbidden to receive any gifts or any other benefits from service recipients or their families;
- 1.7.4 It is strictly forbidden to receive any gift, advantage or cash benefit or cash equivalents; such as rewards, discounts, or any other forms of financial benefit from any party in return for providing a health service, prescribing a medical product, supplying it, selling it, or using it in treatment. A health professional is also obligated to provide registered medicines and health products to patients based on their need, and it is strictly prohibited to link the provision of health service or medicine in any health or pharmaceutical facility with any financial benefit or profit considerations such as providing free goods, inclusion fees, etc.;

1.8 Dealing with Emergency Cases

Health professionals should comply with the following:

- 1.8.1 Reach out to service recipients or the injured persons as soon as possible in order to provide them with first aid and treatment;
- 1.8.2 Initiate medical intervention in emergency cases without waiting for permission from service recipients or their guardians, provided that it is possibly that the service recipient is at the risk of death or imminent serious harm, or that there is a high probability of such harm;
- 1.8.3 Alleviate the pain of service recipients through all available medical, psychological and physical methods and make service recipients and their families feel that health professionals are caring about their health;
- 1.8.4 Alleviate the suffering and reassuring service recipients' family;
- 1.8.5 Expedite the admission of service recipients to the internal departments whenever needed and refrain from leaving them without treatment in emergency department for a long period of time;

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- 1.8.6 Continue providing the necessary health care for service recipients in emergency situations until the state of emergency is over or until they are referred to another qualified practitioner;
- 1.8.7 Commit to achieving internationally recognized quality standards in dealing with emergency cases.

2. Self-Responsibility

2.1 Knowledge and Skills

Health professionals should comply with the following:

- 2.1.1 Maintain and develop the performance standard through continuously updating their professional knowledge and skills throughout the work period. In particular, health professionals should periodically participate in educational activities that enhance their performance when providing health services;
- 2.1.2 To be aware of the limits of their personal information and competence and should not pretend that they know everything. Health professionals should realize that they are responsible for service recipients to the extent of the duty assigned to them, and should stop at the limits of their capabilities and seek help from other health professionals with wider knowledge, if needed;
- 2.1.3 Learn about and comply with the rules and regulations that regulate the profession of health professionals;
- 2.1.4 Be elegant without excess. Health professionals should be well-dressed, good-smelling, and presentable, as should ignore such things that negatively affect the relationship between health professionals, service recipients, and their colleagues;
- 2.1.5 Take care of the physical and mental health as it has a direct impact on the quality of services provided by health professionals and also affects their profession and society, while performing their professional duties;
- 2.1.6 Health professionals should protect themselves from potential dangers while performing their work, take the necessary measures to prevent or reduce such risks, and avoid the risks that may result from exposure to potential dangers. They must know that their health is important for the society and should be preserved to ensure the best performance of their work;
- 2.1.7 Seek help in solving personal problems that may negatively affect the service provided by the health professionals;
- 2.1.8 Adhere to the general standards of good behavior and avoid places that may affect a personal professional reputation;
- 2.1.9 Prevent trainees from starting direct learning on service recipients until they possess the required skills, which can be acquired using other educational alternatives, whenever available, such as medical models/statues, simulation models, laboratories, virtual education using the computer, and other means.

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2.2 Maintaining Professionalism

Health professionals should comply with the following:

- 2.2.1 Protect the honor of the profession through paying attention to appearance and behavior, having complete dedication to the profession, achieving excellence in work through mastering the skills, observing the rights of service recipients, and maintaining good behavior;
- 2.2.2 Continue scientific and practical contributions to the development of the profession through research, studies, editing of articles and continuing education;
- 2.2.3 Avoid abusing the professional position by achieving financial or moral privileges or advantages;
- 2.2.4 Avoid any acts that might offend or may harm the profession or degrade the position of the health professional, such as mistreatment, failure to adhere to deadlines, lying, falsification, taking risks, pretending to know something the health professional does not really know, or any other negative behaviors;
- 2.2.5 Avoid any behavior that violates honesty or integrity when dealing with service recipients and not to make them lose confidence through cheating, fraudulence, or establishment of an inappropriate relationship with them or with anyone of their family members to receive financial benefits illegally or doing anything that may lead to breaching the standards of the health profession;
- 2.2.6 Follow the proper standards of personal behavior and public morals while performing all professional activities by avoiding any violent or unsafe behavior or being under the influence of alcohol or any other narcotic substance;
- 2.2.7 Take the proper action if the health professional gets to know that a member of the health care team is service recipients, is ignorant or negligent in performing his/her responsibilities, and exert all efforts to protect the service recipient in the first place, then protect the health professional;
- 2.2.8 Avoid seeking fame at the expense of the profession's principles and ethics.

2.3 Excellence and Innovation

Health professionals should comply with the following:

- 2.3.1 Perform the duties and obligations in timely manner, with the required diligence, using the proper method;
- 2.3.2 Participate in submitting proposals to improve and develop the services provided in a climate of mutual trust and understanding;
- 2.3.3 Create a supportive atmosphere that encourages new ideas, take responsible risks, strive for the best, celebrate success, demonstrate responsibility, and consider safety in all aspects of the service provided.

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3. Responsibility Towards Colleagues

3.1 Respect for Colleagues

Health professionals should comply with the following:

- 3.1.1 Behave well with colleagues and treat them in the way a health professional would like to be treated;
- 3.1.2 Communicate clearly, effectively, respectfully, and promptly with colleagues and other professionals who provide care for service recipients or clients;
- 3.1.3 Avoid interfering in colleagues' private issues or to talk behind their back to fabricate problems and cause harm for them;
- 3.1.4 Avoid directing any criticism to one of the colleagues in front of service recipients, especially if the intention is to push people to underestimate them or out of being envious towards them. In addition, an honest, systematic scientific criticism should not be directed in front of service recipients, rather it should be in scientific meetings, medical conferences and medical courses. If necessary, health professionals should inform their colleagues of their point of view privately, rather than in front of service recipients or in their presence;
- 3.1.5 Be prepared to review the professional performance of their colleagues, accept their review of their work, and strive to prevent that professional or personal relationships have affect over the positive or negative evaluation;
- 3.1.6 Exert all efforts to teach health professionals who work with the health professional on the same team or his/her trainees and ensure transferring all his/her experience, knowledge and skills that he/she possesses to them, in addition to giving them the opportunity to be trained and to develop their skills;
- 3.1.7 Prevent them from blaming or reprimanding the trainees in front of service recipients when they are teaching them, as this demeans their dignity.

3.2 Delegation, Referral, and Delivery

Health professionals should comply with the following:

- 3.2.1 Take reasonable steps to ensure that the person to whom the health professional is delegating or referring service recipients has the qualifications, experience, knowledge and skills necessary to provide the required care;
- 3.2.2 Understand that although the health professional who has delegated will not be accountable for the decisions and actions of the delegated health professionals, the health professional who has delegated remains responsible for the delegation decision;
- 3.2.3 Always transmit sufficient information about service recipients or the health procedure to provided the opportunity to provide them with continuous care;
- 3.2.4 Enhance access to health care. If they are unable to provide a health service, they should refer the service recipient to another specialist or other health facility that can provide the required health service.

3.3 Reporting Cases of Misconduct

Health professionals should comply with the following:

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- 3.3.1 Report and remedy any violation when the health professional has a valid reason to believe that the rights of service recipients have been violated or an unethical behavior has been made by a colleague;
- 3.3.2 Report to the competent authority, as per the applicable procedure, whenever they are aware that the condition of one of their colleagues may affect the safety of any health procedure or they believe that such condition will harm the service recipient in order for the authority to consider the situation and take the proper action;
- 3.3.3 Protect people who report misconduct from discrimination or intimidation.

4. Responsibility Towards Society

Acting as a Part of Society

Health professionals should comply with the following:

- 4.1.1 Act as an role model for the members of society, through their faith and preservation of their human relationships, far from any suspicion that affects the value of the health profession they practice and to avoid any doubts about their behavior;
- 4.1.2 Practice the profession with the highest possible knowledge, competence, confidence and integrity, while continuing to being up-to-date of developments in their field of work;
- 4.1.3 Serious pursuit, using skills, knowledge and experience, to raise the level of standards and quality of health services that are available for the society;
- 4.1.4 Pay due attention to public health through proper health awareness to promote or contribute to preventive programs and protect public health of the society;
- 4.1.5 Provide assistance to the competent authorities in performing their duties to maintain public health through reporting communicable diseases and maintaining public safety;
- 4.1.6 Be honest and trustworthy when issuing any certificates or documents, such as certificates of absence, sick leave, etc. A health professional is considered a witness, therefore he/she should be honest in his/her testimony and should impartial in terms of considerations of kinship, love or interest, and must not submit a medical report contrary to the truth as he/she is aware that the unjustified absence of an employee may hinder the interests of the society;
- 4.1.7 Interact with the media for the purpose of providing accurate information to society through coordinating with officials in the health authority.

4.2 Preserving Natural Resources

Health professionals should comply with the following:

- 4.2.1 Realize that they have a responsibility to ensure that they are not contributing in any way to harm the environment while carrying out their jobs;
- 4.2.2 Realize their responsibility to preserve and use health resources in the most appropriate way. Hence, they should not request tests or consultations or prescribe medication that is not needed for service recipients;

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4.2.3 Realize their responsibilities to provide equitable use of health resources among community members.

4.3 Disposal of Health Care Services Waste

4.3.1 Health professionals should protect the environment and society through ensuring the safe disposal of waste resulting from health care services in a legal and environmentally friendly manner.