

AMA Code of Medical Ethics

2.3.5 Soliciting Charitable Contributions from Patients

Charitable contributions play an important role in supporting and improving a community's health, and physicians are encouraged to participate in fundraising and other solicitation activities.

To sustain the trust that is the foundation of the patient-physician relationship and to reassure patients that their welfare is the physician's primary priority, physicians who participate in fundraising should:

- (a) Assure patients that they need not contribute in order to continue receiving quality care.
- (b) Refrain from directly soliciting contributions from their own patients, especially during clinical encounters.
- (c) Solicit contributions by making information available, for example, in their office reception areas or by speaking at fundraising events.
- (d) Protect patient privacy and confidentiality by not acknowledging that a patient is under the physician's care when approached by fundraising personnel without the prior consent of the patient.
- (e) Obtain permission from the patient before releasing information for purposes of fundraising when the nature of the physician's practice could make it possible to identify the medical services provided or the patient's diagnosis.
- (f) Refer patients or families who wish to make charitable contributions to appropriate information or fundraising personnel.
- (g) Be sensitive to the likelihood that they may be perceived to be acting in their professional role when participating in fundraising activities as a member of the general community.

AMA Principles of Medical Ethics: IV,VII,VIII