

AMA Code of Medical Ethics

9.2.2 Resident & Fellow Physicians' Involvement in Patient Care

Residents and fellows have dual roles as trainees and caregivers. Residents and fellows share responsibility with physicians involved in their training to facilitate educational and patient care goals.

Residents and fellows are physicians first and foremost and should always regard the interests of patients as paramount. When they are involved in patient care, residents and fellows should:

- (a) Interact honestly with patients, including clearly identifying themselves as members of a team that is supervised by the attending physician and clarifying the role they will play in patient care. They should notify the attending physician if a patient refuses care from a resident or fellow.
- (b) Participate fully in established mechanisms in their training programs and hospital systems for reporting and analyzing errors. They should cooperate with attending physicians in communicating errors to patients.
- (c) Monitor their own health and level of alertness so that these factors do not compromise their ability to care for patients safely. Residents and fellows should recognize that providing patient care beyond time permitted by their programs (for example, "moonlighting" or other activities that interfere with adequate rest during off hours) might be harmful to themselves and patients.

Physicians involved in training residents and fellows should:

- (d) Take steps to help ensure that training programs are structured to be conducive to the learning process as well as to promote the patient's welfare and dignity.
- (e) Address patient refusal of care from a resident or fellow. If after discussion, a patient does not want to participate in training, the physician may exclude residents or fellows from the patient's care. If appropriate, the physician may transfer the patient's care to another physician or nonteaching service or another health care facility.
- (f) Provide residents and fellows with appropriate faculty supervision and availability of faculty consultants, and with graduated responsibility relative to level of training and expertise.
- (g) Observe pertinent regulations and seek consultation with appropriate institutional resources, such as an ethics committee, to resolve educational or patient care conflicts that arise in the course of training. All parties involved in such conflicts must continue to regard patient welfare as the first priority. Conflict resolution should not be punitive, but should aim at assisting residents and fellows to complete their training successfully.

AMA Principles of Medical Ethics: I,II,V,VIII