

AMA Code of Medical Ethics

11.2.3.1 Restrictive Covenants

Competition among physicians is ethically justifiable when it is based on such factors as quality of services, skill, experience, conveniences offered to patients, fees, or credit terms.

Covenants-not-to-compete restrict competition, can disrupt continuity of care, and may limit access to care.

Physicians should not enter into covenants that:

- (a) Unreasonably restrict the right of a physician to practice medicine for a specified period of time or in a specified geographic area on termination of a contractual relationship; and
- (b) Do not make reasonable accommodation for patients' choice of physician.

Physicians in training should not be asked to sign covenants not to compete as a condition of entry into any residency or fellowship program.

AMA Principles of Medical Ethics: III,IV,VI,VII