

# **CMDA Ethics Statement**

## **Healthcare Right of Conscience**

Respect for conscientiously held beliefs of individuals and for individual differences is an essential part of our free society. The right of choice is foundational in our healthcare process, and it applies to both healthcare professionals and patients alike. Issues of conscience arise when some aspect of medical care is in conflict with the personal beliefs and values of the patient or the healthcare professional. CMDA believes that in such circumstances the Rights of Conscience have priority.

### **PATIENT'S RIGHT OF CONSCIENCE:**

- The right of competent patients on the basis of conscience to refuse treatment, even when such refusal would likely bring harm to themselves, should be respected.
- The right of competent patients on the basis of conscience to refuse treatment, when such refusal would likely threaten the health and/or life of others, should be resisted and should become a matter of public interest and responsibility.
- The right of a healthcare surrogate on the basis of conscience to refuse treatment, thereby threatening the health and/or life of another, should be resisted and should become a matter of public interest and responsibility.

### **THE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL'S RIGHT OF CONSCIENCE:**

- All healthcare professionals have the right to refuse to participate in situations or procedures that they believe to be morally wrong and/or harmful to the patient or others. In such circumstances, healthcare professionals have an obligation to ensure that the patient's records are transferred to the healthcare professional of the patient's choice.

### **THE HEALTHCARE INSTITUTION'S RIGHT OF CONSCIENCE:**

- Healthcare institutions have the right to refuse to provide services that are contrary to their foundational beliefs.
- Healthcare institutions have the obligation to disclose the services they would refuse to give.
- Healthcare institutions should not lose public funding as a result of exercising their right of conscience.

### **HEALTHCARE EDUCATION RIGHT OF CONSCIENCE:**

- Institutions, educators and trainees should be allowed to refuse to participate in policies and procedures that they deem morally objectionable without threat of reprisal.
- Healthcare professionals at all levels should seek to learn about and understand policies and procedures that they deem morally objectionable..
- No organization or governing body should mandate participation in policies or procedures that violate conscience.

## **CMDA Ethics Statement**

CMDA believes Christian healthcare professionals in our society should give dual service\* to a Holy God and the humanity He created and sustains. We believe the Christian healthcare professional's conscience should be informed by available evidence and Scripture. We believe obedience to conscience is obligatory for all Christians.

See statement on Moral Complicity with Evil.

*Approved by the House of Representatives  
Passed with 53 approvals; 2 abstentions.  
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