

IMPORTANT RULES INCORPORATED IN ANY ETHICAL CODE FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

1. Introduction

One of the most defining characteristics of a professional is the code of ethics to which he or she conforms to. This code of conduct that provides the values, duties as well as the ethical responsibilities he or she has that forms part of the chosen profession. The code of ethics are in fact only guidelines and does not provide directions for the action to take in particular situations and they are also open to interpretation by the specific professional which leads to different views on these. (Kavaler & Spiegel, 2003:164)

2. Rules to be incorporated into the ethical code of health care professionals

Many different important rules are incorporated into any ethical code for health care professionals in particular and if these are not adhered to many consequences may arise due to the non-adherence of the professional. The most important rules which should make out as part in the ethical code of health care professionals are:

1. **Competency:** The provider of health care must ensure that he or as well as all staff maintain their competency in their different fields of expertise and they furthermore may only provide services which they are qualified to provide. They should also be up to date with advances in their discipline as well as know what their strengths, weaknesses, skills, deficits and limitations are. (Plante, 2010:374) If this rule is broken a consequence might be that a wrong diagnosis is made which endangers the patient which may lead to lawsuits and that the provider loses his licence to practice.
2. **Confidentiality:** Providers of health care must treat all matters relating to the patient with utmost confidentiality and should not be made known to others unless required by and stipulated by the law. (Lindh, Pooler, Tampara & Dahl, 2009:126) If this rule is broken the patient may sue the provider for not adhering to it and the provider will lose his license to practice.

3. Consent: The patient has the right of being made known of all information and risks regarding the treatment in order to make an informed decision and to give consent. Consent must be attained from the patient before any form of treatment can be administered to him or her. (Dreeben, 2006:126) If the patient is treated by the provider without consent the patient may refuse to pay the bill which has the consequence that the provider himself has to bare the costs incurred.
4. Exploitation: The provider of health care has the ethical responsibility to not exploit, by charging illegal and excessive fees, his or her patients and to see that the fee charged correlates with the degree of difficulty of the services provided by the health care professional. Furthermore the provider must also make all fees known to the patient and nay form of fee splitting is unethical. A further responsibility is that the provider of health care services must ensure that only actual services rendered are submitted to claim from the patients insurance. (Lindh, Pooler, Tampara & Dahl, 2009:127) Breaking any rules which are applicable to money is not only unethical but also punishable by law, therefore the breaking of any of the rules that form part of exploitation will result in the provider being lawfully prosecuted as well as the loss of his or her license to practice.

References

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