



## **THE ETHICAL FOUNDATION OF CANADA HEALTH ALLIANCE**

The emergence of CHA is evident that we are in dire need of a new medical paradigm which educates and empowers patients to become autonomous citizens. The first step for establishing a new medical system in Canada is to build a code of conduct and ethics that all the health professionals must adhere to. Only if our nation's health professionals are rooted in this foundation of agreed upon ethics, can they be given the opportunity to serve their communities.

Despite having a Code of Ethics and Professionalism that has been set out by the Canadian Medical Association, our current medical institution and majority of health professionals are blatantly disregarding the standards that have been set for an ethical practice. The inability to uphold the stated ethical code by the medical community does not hinder the authenticity of the code. CHA would like to propose a new Code of Ethics, adopting many of the virtues that have been set out before and expanding them. The code will highlight and prioritize certain virtues that align with CHA's mission to rejuvenate the medical realm of Canada and will take a deontological approach to uphold the fundamental responsibilities of health professionals.

Deontology derives from the Greek word deon, meaning duty (Alexander, L., & Moore, M. 2020). It is the duty of every health professional to maintain the virtues and the uphold the commitments of their profession at the highest regard and in the face of any adversity. This document will first layout the virtues that sustain the creditability of the medical profession, and then propose a revived Oath for Health Professionals. As mentioned before, these virtues have been iterated prior in the field of medicine, they have even been explicitly stated in our supposed Code of Ethics; however, over the years, with corruption slowing intruding into the profession, many of the long-standing ethics have not been upheld and honored.

CHA aims to bring these virtues and commitments to the forefront of the profession and will work tirelessly to ensure the new medical system of Canada upholds the fundamental ethics.

The virtues that a health professional must hold, in order of importance, include humility, prudence, honesty, integrity and compassion.

## HUMILITY

***“A humble physician acknowledges and is cautious not to overstep the limits of their knowledge and skills or the limits of medicine, seeks advice and support from colleagues in challenging circumstances, and recognizes the patient’s knowledge of their own circumstances.”***

(CMA Code of Ethics and Professionalism)

In response to the current cultural climate, the virtue of humility has been listed at the top of our list. With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, many nations across the world have turned to doctors and scientists for aid in confronting the everchanging virus and assistance in implementing a response against the virus. In such a position of authority, it is vital that our medical professionals act with humility and be hesitant to support response measures that claim the science is absolute. As science continues to grow, our knowledge has expanded, and we are constantly enlightened with new knowledge that was not privy to us in the past. This is precisely due to the meticulous and stringent scientific method. It is the duty of all medical professionals to follow the proven empirical method of acquiring knowledge and interpreting the results through unbiased lens, while constantly searching for more evidence to support their claims. If the evidence does not support the claims, the health professional should gracefully take the new evidence into consideration and shift to align with the evidence.

## PRUDENCE

***“A prudent physician uses clinical and moral reasoning and judgement, considers all relevant knowledge and circumstances, and makes decisions carefully, in good conscience, and with due regard for principles of exemplary medical care.”***

(CMA Code of Ethics and Professionalism)

The virtue of prudence is vital in providing medical care that is based in the best interest of the patient. In recent years, contradicting views from the mainstream narrative have been constantly suppressed or simply disregarded. This alarming trend has unfortunately also made its way into the medical community. Such practices have been a disservice to our society, as they strip away our right to make informed decisions. We want to emphasize the consideration of all relevant knowledge when making decisions about treatments, contrary to the current biased approach, and to consider the moral implications of those decisions. CHA will aim to uphold this virtue by providing a library of information and education to both the public and to medical professionals through an integrative lens. This will provide individuals with the tools necessary to making difficult medical decisions.

## HONESTY

***“An honest physician is forthright, respects the truth, and does their best to seek, preserve, and communicate that truth sensitively and respectfully.”***

(CMA Code of Ethics and Professionalism)

Over the past couple of years, we have witnessed a blatant diversion from the truth in the field of medicine, and it has been both detrimental to the public it is intended to serve, and to the credibility of the profession. In order to maintain trust with the public and with the very patients that they serve, health practitioners can not dwindle this indispensable virtue. Health practitioners are expected to be honest about their knowledge of any given treatment, as well as being honest about any conflicts of interest that may affect their judgment about various health measures that are proposed. The virtue of honesty is tightly linked with humility and prudence, as it cannot be fulfilled without upholding the other two.

## INTEGRITY

***“A physician who acts with integrity demonstrates consistency in their intentions and actions and acts in a truthful manner in accordance with professional expectations, even in the face of adversity.”***

(CMA Code of Ethics and Professionalism)

The current political and cultural climate has put adverse pressure on the medical community, and unfortunately many professionals, in an attempt to salvage their careers, have succumbed to the corruption and have failed to live up to the oath they made to their profession and to their patients. It is only by upholding the virtue of integrity that a health professional can live up to all the commitments they have made by taking their oath. It is the duty of health practitioners to respect the ethics and standards of the profession and honour the oath they took before starting their careers. Such a virtue is greatly tested at times of adversity, and CHA will work tirelessly to remind health professionals about the importance of integrity and aid them in any way to live up to it.

## COMPASSION

***“A compassionate physician recognizes suffering and vulnerability, seeks to understand the unique circumstances of each patient and to alleviate the patient’s suffering, and accompanies the suffering and vulnerable patient.”***

(CMA Code of Ethics and Professionalism)

There has been unfortunate lack of compassion that is arisen during the pandemic, and it is important to revive this integral virtue in the medical profession. It is concerning to see the

medical establishment's the lack of concern for how patients are being ostracised for making medical decisions that are contrary to what is considered the 'correct' thing to do. CHA aims to build a patient-driven and non-coercive health care system, in which the health practitioners show compassion for their patients and their individual circumstances and will always respect their patients' autonomy and their medical decisions.

## **OATH FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONS**

We would like to propose a new oath for health professionals which integrates our goal of promoting patient central medical practices. This oath is inspired and derived from physician oaths that have been put forward in the past, including The Oath of Hippocrates, Declaration of Geneva, A Modern Hippocratic Oath by Dr. Lasagna, The Oath of the Healer by Louis Weinstein, and the American Medical Association Code of Ethics

Our proposed new CHA Oath for Health Professionals is as follows:

I do solemnly swear, by whatever each of us holds most sacred:

- I shall hold the upmost respect for my teachers who have passed down their knowledge, which I will nurture forever. I will carry on the tradition of continual learning and practice with humility, being cautious of never overstepping the limits of my knowledge while practicing the art of healing.
- I will only practice my art of healing for the benefit of my patients. I acknowledge this art is founded in science, however, an integral component of it includes compassion, sympathy, understanding and love for the patient.
- I shall strive to lead my life and my practice virtuously and honourably, with a good will and with an impeccable conduct. I will not indulge in any such vice that may jeopardize my oath, and I will never practice my art to aid in corruption or allow personal incentives to cloud my judgement.
- I will not allow matters of ideology, politics, social standing, religion, nationality, or race to stand in the way of my duty towards my patient.
- To provide adequate care for my patient it is my responsibility to take a holistic approach and not hinder aid due to personal bias of treatment. Wherever possible, I will aim to prevent disease, as "prevention is preferable to a cure" (Lasanga). I will encourage the patient to be an active participant in the course of their medical treatment, and vow to uphold their decisions that have been made with all the relevant information available to them.

- I will keep all the secrets that are confided in me by my patients, and will never reveal them, even once they have passed away.
- If a patient I am caring for dies, I will uphold the strength to allow them to die with dignity and in peace.
- Above all, the health of my patient will be my priority. I will be loyal to my patient and act in their best interests, never allowing potential personal gains to cloud my judgement and neglect my duty to them. I will hold true that I am not treating a disease, but rather a sick human being, and take into consideration other factors regarding the patient's life, such as interpersonal relations or economic stability, that may be affecting the patient's health.

***“If I keep this oath faithfully, may I enjoy my life and practice my art, respected by all men and in all times; but if I swerve from it or violate it, may the reverse be my lot.”***

(The Oath of Hippocrates)

## **References**

*CMA Code of Ethics and Professionalism. Canadian Medical Association. (2018, December). Retrieved February 2, 2022, from <https://policybase.cma.ca/viewer?file=%2Fmedia%2FPolicyPDF%2FPD19-03.pdf#page=1>*

*Physician Oaths. Association of American Physicians and Surgeons. (n.d.). Retrieved February 2, 2022, from <https://www.aapsonline.org/ethics/oaths.htm>*

*Alexander, L., & Moore, M. (2020, October 30). Deontological Ethics. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Retrieved February 2, 2022, from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-deontological/>*