



MISSOURI STATE TUMOR REGISTRARS ASSOCIATION

CODE OF ETHICS

1990

Adapted from the National Tumor Registrar's Association  
Guide to the Interpretation of  
The Code of Ethics 1986

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## **GUIDE TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THE CODE OF ETHICS**

### **I. CONDUCT MYSELF IN THE PRACTICE OF THIS PROFESSION SO AS TO BRING HONOR AND DIGNITY TO MYSELF, THE TUMOR REGISTRY PROFESSION, AND THE ASSOCIATION.**

#### **GUIDES**

- A. The tumor registrar should maintain high standards of conduct, integrity and fairness in all professional actions and decisions so as to establish and sustain an irreproachable, professional reputation. Examples:
- Make judgments and decisions without personal bias or prejudice.
  - Give primary consideration in all decisions as to the affect actions may have on a patient's health and welfare.
- B. Business on behalf of the employer should be conducted in an honest and ethical manner, declining favors which will influence any decisions, and avoiding commercialization of one's position.
- C. A member has the obligation to refrain from commenting disparagingly, without justifications, about the professional work of another member.
- D. Evaluation of performance of another tumor registrar should be done fairly and with objectivity. Example:
- Never let personal prejudice influence the type of evaluation or reference given.
  - Offer only job-related solicited information.
- E. Tumor registrars shall use professional titles and degrees consistent with the dignity of the profession. A certified tumor registrar should use the letters CTR.
- F. A tumor registrar shall not exert undue pressure in obtaining clients/employment. Advertising should contain only the registrar's name, degrees (if desired), addresses, nature of services offered, and professional memberships. If requested, a resume and list of references may be furnished. Qualifications listed should be those for which supporting evidence is available.

- G. Distribution of announcements concerning the formal organization and availability of tumor registry consultant services is ethical. Repeated distribution of unsolicited announcements is unethical. Any distribution should be in keeping with the practice of other health related professionals in the community.
- H. Use of business cards and letterhead stationary is acceptable but should not promote a commercial endeavor which may tend to lower public esteem for the profession. MoSTRA logo or address may not be used in this context.
- I. A member has the obligation to appropriately recognize the contributions of fellow members and co-workers in their efforts to advance tumor registry practice. Publications should give credit where due to one's peers.
- J. A member has the right to speak out against any policies espoused by the Association, but in this respect, it is unethical to represent one's own view as that of the Association or the majority of the members.

**II UPHOLD THE DOCTRINE OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHT TO PRIVACY IN THE DISCLOSURE OF PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE MEDICAL AND SOCIAL INFORMATION.**

**GUIDES**

- A. The patient has a right to feel confident that all identifiable information about him possessed by the tumor registry will be kept confidential unless he waives the privilege, or release of the information is compelled by statute, regulations, or other legal means.
- B. Release of identifiable and non-identifiable information should be in accordance with the established institutional policies. Example:
  - Providing lists of patients' names for marketing research or other commercial use is not proper function of a health institution and such lists should not be released by a tumor registrar without approval of the chief executive officer.
- C. Written policies on the use and proper release of patient information, together with active educational programs for all personnel on the institution's staff, should be upheld by the tumor registrar.
- D. Every effort must be made to ensure that the computerization of tumor registry information is accomplished in a manner which protects the confidence of patient information.

- Actively participate in establishing controls to protect the patient's privacy when electronic information processing is initiated.

**III. COOPERATE WITH OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO PROMOTE THE QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF MEDICAL CARE, ENSURING RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY AND THE DIGNITY OF MEDICAL AND OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONS.**

**GUIDES**

A. Cooperation with other professions and entities engaged in or supportive of health services is an essential factor in the tumor registry profession's greater aim of improving health services and supporting research relevant to the advancement of medical care. Example:

- Accept the right of other health professions to have purpose in their occupation and attempt to understand the thinking and work patterns of professional groups whose primary interest may be different from yours.
- Treat all members of the medical and component professional staff with equal respect and due recognition of the status, privilege, and authority belonging to their respective professions.
- Refrain from making decisions or expressing opinions for which you are not qualified.
- Accept the obligation to assist the medical staff and/or institution in working with other professional groups or entities engaged in utilization review and patient care evaluation, continuing education or professional staff, health services planning, clinical studies, proposed legislation or regulations affecting medical and statistical record systems, and like activities.

B. Courtesy, respect and cooperation should govern the relationships of fellow tumor registrars.

- Recognize there may be differences of opinion between consultants or co-workers regarding certain proposals or recommendations and prevent such differences from leading to utterances or actions inconsistent with the professional stature and dignity of a colleague.

- Do not, however, place loyalty above duty by protecting a fellow tumor registrar who is guilty of unfair or unethical practices. Questions of such conduct should be referred to the Executive Committee for review and evaluation.

## **JOB ORIENTATION**

### **I. RECOGNIZE THE SOURCE OF AUTHORITY AND POWERS DELEGATED TO ME AND CONSCIENTIOUSLY DISCHARGE THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES THUS ENTRUSTED.**

#### **GUIDES**

- A. It is the tumor registrar's duty to give loyal service and to competently carry out the responsibilities of this position. It is unethical to accept a position for which one is inadequately prepared, or to vacate a position without responsibility vested in the position or with the policies of the institution.
- B. In carrying out the duties entrusted to him/her in a responsible manner, the tumor registrar should always:
- Render a truthful accounting of the status of the work over which one has responsibility.
  - Assist the medical staff and other health professional staff in programs related to cancer patient care, cancer education, research, and committee activities in accordance with assigned responsibilities.
  - Resort to the special knowledge, skill, or experience of fellow professionals for referral, counsel, guidance, or consultation when one lacks in some detail the capability required to serve an employer.
- C. For the protection of the employer/client and tumor registrar (including consultants and part-time supervisors), an agreement\* should specify responsibilities, functions, objectives, and terms of service to be fulfilled. Where desirable, the contract may be in writing.

\* Agreement (contract): An understanding, preferably in writing, between consultant and client which spells out responsibilities, functions, objectives, and terms of the relationship including financial arrangements and charges.

- D. Relationships with tumor registry or other institutional personnel should be characterized by courtesy and respect. In carrying out one's duties as a consultant, part-time supervisor, or official surveyor/observer, one's responsibility and authority for seeking and obtaining certain information, files, and statistical data should be tempered with respect for another individual's tenable position and the institution's good name in the community.
- E. The tumor registrar, including consultants and other advisors, should maintain personal integrity and should not hesitate to advise the employer/client if, in the professional judgment of the registrar, the facility is in danger of errors of commission or omission.

**II PRESERVE AND SECURE TUMOR REGISTRY RECORDS, THE INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN, AND THE APPROPRIATE SECONDARY RECORDS IN MY CUSTODY IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, EMPLOYER'S POLICIES, AND EXISTING LEGAL PROVISIONS.**

**GUIDES**

- A. The tumor registrar should at all times support and uphold the professional standards which would produce complete, accurate, and timely information to meet the health and related needs of the patient.
- B. A tumor registrar should not participate in any improper preparation, alteration, or suppression of medical/health records or official minutes duly maintained as part of the operation of the health institution.\*

\* Institution: A public or private organization of facilities and/or staff established to ensure continuity of program; a legally established agency or corporation.

**III PRESERVE THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF PROFESSIONAL DETERMINATIONS MADE BY OFFICIAL COMMITTEES OF HEALTH AND HEALTH-SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS.**

**GUIDE**

- A. The tumor registrar should abstain from revealing or discussing observations, comments, or findings concerning the practice of individual members of the health professions resulting from committee activities such as medical audit findings, individual patient care, professional standards review recommendations or obtained from any other source, except to the designated appropriate authority of the institutions.



**IV DISCLOSE TO NO ONE BUT PROPER AUTHORITIES ANY EVIDENCE OF CONDUCT OR PRACTICE OBSERVED OR REVEALED IN MEDICAL REPORTS WHICH INDICATES POSSIBLE VIOLATION OF ESTABLISHED RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE EMPLOYER OR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE.**

**GUIDES**

- A. Discretion should be exercised in the release or discussion of sensitive information acquired during the course of employment or fulfillment of contracted services which concern the administrative conduct or professional practices within the health institution. Examples:
- Disclose only to proper authorities the conduct or practices believed to be in violation of the institution's internal policies and rules.
  - Disclose to proper regulatory or law enforcement agencies the conduct or practices believed to be illegal only when, after informing the health institution, no corrective action has been enacted.

**COMPENSATION**

**I. PLACE SERVICE BEFORE MATERIAL GAIN AND STRIVE AT ALL TIMES TO PROVIDE SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE NEED FOR QUALITY HEALTH CARE AND TREATMENT TO ALL WHO ARE ILL WITH CANCER OR OTHER NEOPLASMS.**

**GUIDE**

- A. The tumor registrar should place primary importance on providing a high standard of professional services; financial considerations are secondary to this objective.

**II ACCEPT COMPENSATION ONLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH SERVICES ACTUALLY PERFORMED OR NEGOTIATED WITH THE HEALTH INSTITUTION.**

**GUIDES**

- A. A tumor registrar shall not accept anything of any value from a third party provider of services nor products to the health institution when that third party is functioning for the health institution.

- B. Unless openly engaged in placement bureau service, refuse to accept finder and referral fees. Refuse acceptance or offer to divide tumor registrar service fees with another party who is not a partner in or an associate of a medical consultant group.
- C. The tumor registrar should endeavor to avoid conflict of interest by providing full disclosure to the employer or client of any interest in any provider of services or products.

## **PROFESSIONALISM**

### **I. REPRESENT TRUTHFULLY AND ACCURATELY PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS, EDUCATION, AND EXPERIENCE IN ANY OFFICIAL TRANSACTION OR NOTICE, INCLUDING OTHER POSITIONS AND DUALITY OF INTERESTS.**

#### **GUIDES**

- A. Misrepresentation of one's professional qualifications, employment, and interests reflect adversely on the profession as well as on oneself and lowers the public esteem for the profession.
- B. A statement of any other positions of duality of interest in the health or health related field, both remunerative or non-remunerative in nature, should be made available on request of the employer. Examples of duality of interests: outside consultation services, committee appointments, advisory positions, elected office, business enterprise interests, and the like.
- C. Credentials, professional education, and experience are to be stated truthfully and accurately in any official transaction with MoSTRA or any other professional association, any employer or prospective employer, and any program coordinator or publisher.
- D. Those documents which authenticate registration, accreditation, academic achievements, and membership status in recognized professional organizations may be displayed. Displays which imply qualifications not possessed are unethical.

**II STRIVE TO INCREASE THE PROFESSION'S BODY OF SYSTEMATIC KNOWLEDGE AND INDIVIDUAL COMPETENCY THROUGH CONTINUED SELF-IMPROVEMENT AND APPLICATION OF CURRENT ADVANCEMENTS TO THE CONDUCT OF TUMOR REGISTRY PRACTICES.**

**GUIDES**

- A. The achievements and preservation of professional status is accomplished through the mastery of tumor registry activities competently applied and the continual striving for the application of new knowledge and increased skills. Examples:
- Acquire information by reading pertinent literature.
  - Attend workshops, institutes, and other continuing education programs.
  - Examine and scrutinize functions performed as a tumor registrar for purpose of self-evaluation in carrying out professional duties.
- B. Advancements in the knowledge and practice of tumor registry administration emerge through participating in studies and projects related to the principles and practices underlying its activities. Examples:
- Promote and/or participate in advancing the development, maintenance, use, and preservation of tumor registry practices.
  - Foresee subjects necessary in current and future training of tumor registrars.
- C. Information on changes and new developments in methods and procedures should be made available to fellow tumor registrars for purpose of increasing the knowledge and skills of the profession in accordance with the purpose of the profession's occupation, exercising due care to distinguish sharing new knowledge, and developments in tumor registry practice from that of promoting products or services of your employer or favorite commercial firm.
- D. The tumor registrar should endeavor to provide the professional growth and development of those under her/his supervision.

**III. PARTICIPATE IN DEVELOPING AND STRENGTHENING PROFESSIONAL MANPOWER AND APPROPRIATELY REPRESENT THE PROFESSION IN PUBLIC.**

**GUIDE**

A. The foreseeable future of the profession is dependent upon the affirmative and responsible activities of members to recruit and train fellow tumor registrars.  
Example:

- Encourage and assist in the recruitment of students for professional training, so long as the need exists.
- Help the student and the new tumor registrar to participate in activities and services for their continued development as tumor registrars.
- Use your special skills and knowledge to enhance the status and productivity of professional colleagues through participating in continuing education programs and publication of scholarly papers.
- Promote understanding of, respect for, and interest in the profession within one's community.

**ASSOCIATION**

**I DISCHARGE HONORABLY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ANY ASSOCIATION POSITION TO WHICH I AM APPOINTED OR ELECTED.**

**GUIDE**

A. The Association has a dual responsibility: safeguarding the members of the profession and promoting the services to be rendered by the professional to the health field. These two functions should be borne in mind in any deliberation undertaken by members, committees, officers, or delegates of the Association.  
Examples:

- Discharge one's obligation to the profession with integrity, discretion, and by one's best endeavors in representing the Association.
- Perform conscientiously the duties of any Association office to which elected or the assignments of any committee to which appointed.

- Resign one's office or assignment if unforeseen circumstances prevent one from carrying out the responsibilities of an office or committee after the acceptance of the post.
- Preserve the confidentiality of any privileged information obtained in an official capacity as a member of the Executive Board or of a committee or other empanelled group.

**II UPHOLD THE STANDARDS OF THE PROFESSION BY REPORTING TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THIS ASSOCIATION ANY BREACH OF THIS CODE OF ETHICS BY FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE PROFESSION.**

**GUIDES**

- A. Any evidence of illegal, unfair, or incompetent practice or unethical conduct of fellow members of this Association should be reported to the Executive Board of the Missouri State Tumor Registrars Association.
- Transmit all referrals in writing, accompanied by supportive evidence of the unethical behavior or alleged violation.
  - Do not shield an individual guilty of unfair or unethical practices.
- B. Judgments of unethical behavior and recommendations for sanction are the responsibility of the Executive Board rather than of individuals.

**PROCEDURES FOR  
REPORTING AND PROCESSING  
VIOLATIONS OF THE  
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**PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING  
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1. A signed, dated Letter of Complaint, containing details of the nature, facts, and circumstances of the complaint and any supporting documentation shall be sent by certified mail to the President of the Association.
  
2. The President shall:
  - a. Forward a copy of all materials received to the members of the Executive Board within thirty (30) days of receipt.
  - b. Notify the accused of the nature of the complaint and the name of the accuser by certified mail within fifteen (15) days of the receipt of the complaint.
  - c. Request the accused to present his/her defense, in writing, to the President within thirty (30) days of the notification of complaint.
  - d. Forward a copy of the defense submitted by the accused to the members of the Executive Board within fifteen (15) days of receipt.
  
3. The members of the Executive Board shall review the complaint, the supporting documents, and the defense submitted by the accused with regard to their relevance to the Code of Ethics or Bylaws within thirty (30) days of receipt.
  
4. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of written defense from the accused, the President will initiate a meeting or a telephone survey with the board members to discuss the complaint and make recommendations for action to be taken.
  
5. The President shall notify the accused of the Board's decision of action to be taken by certified mail within thirty (30) days of the meeting. The accuser shall also be notified of the decision by the President.

The level of disciplinary action shall be at the discretion of the Board of Directors.
  
6. Letter of intent to appeal the Board of Directors' ruling must be submitted by the accused for receipt by the President within ten (10) days of the accused's receipt of decision of the Board of Directors.
  
7. The Board shall review all relevant material regarding the appeal. The decision shall be communicated to the accused by certified mail, and to the accuser, via the President. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the accused's letter of intent to appeal.

- 8 This decision shall be binding on all parties except where expulsion is recommended. The accused may further appeal an expulsion.
- 9 All materials and discussion relevant to the complaint, investigation, and disciplinary action shall be confidential. Disclosure to unauthorized persons, (any individual who is not a Board member, the accused or the accuser) shall constitute a violation of the Code of Ethics. Upon closure of the case, all documents shall be placed in a sealed file, identified only by the nature of the case and action taken. The file may be opened and used only by the Board of Directors if needed as precedent.
- 10 The President and President-Elect should be the only individuals who know the names of the accuser and the accused.