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Standard of Practice

Code of Ethics

Dentists shall take reasonable steps to ensure that the Dental Act and the Bylaws of the NBDS are respected by all persons, employees, shareholders or associates who work with them in the practice of the profession. This document may be used by the NBDS or other bodies in determining whether appropriate standards of practice and professional responsibilities have been maintained.

New Brunswick Dental Society

Board Approved

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Fundamental Responsibilities

1. Consider first the patient's wellbeing.
2. Treat the patient with dignity and as someone worthy of respect.

Respect for persons is a fundamental principle that excludes not only exploitation and discrimination but also discourteousness and insensitivity.

3. Practise dentistry with competence and integrity, and in the absence of incompetency. Practise following the scientific standards recognized in dental medicine.
4. Seek constantly to deepen your knowledge to maintain and improve your professional attitudes, knowledge and skills.
5. Fight against any influence or interference that may undermine your professional integrity.
6. Promote and maintain your own health and wellbeing.

Responsibilities Toward Patients

1. Recognize conflicts of interest arising during your professional activities and duties and resolve them in your patients' best interests.
2. Advise your patient when your personal values will influence the recommendations or dental treatment that the patient wishes or needs.

If the refusal or delay of treatment may cause harm to the patient, the dentist has an obligation to refer the patient to another specialist dentist without delay.

3. Refrain from exploiting patients for personal gain.
4. Take all reasonable measures to avoid causing harm to patients; if a patient suffers any harm, reveal it to them.
5. Recognize your limits and, if needed, recommend or request additional services and advice.
6. Set fair professional fees. **Dentists shall advise their patients of the approximate cost of their services before the start of treatment and refrain from requiring advance payment in full for services.**
7. Dentists and their staff shall follow generally recognized rules for hygiene and asepsis.

8. Refrain from meddling in your patients' personal affairs.
9. Dentists shall perform a service or provide a prescription only if these are required from a dental point of view.
10. Dentists shall refrain from taking any action or making any diagnosis without sufficient knowledge of the underlying facts.

Interruption in the Patient-Dentist Relationship

1. Accept patients without any discrimination (i.e.: age, disability, gender expression or identity, genetic characteristics, language, marital or family status, medical disorder, ethnic origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status).
2. Provide all appropriate assistance possible to anyone in urgent need of dental care.
3. Dentists shall not, except for a fair and reasonable motive, cease treating a patient.
4. Should treatment cease, dentists shall advise patients of their intention and ensure that this cessation of service does not have a negative effect on their patients' health.

Communication, Decision-Making and Consent

1. Provide your patients the information they need to make informed decisions on their dental care and answer their questions to the best of your skill. Use language that the patient can understand. Use terms that are both simple and exact.

To allow patients to provide fully informed consent, dentists are under the obligation to provide them with all information that, from the patients' point of view, will affect their decision.

2. Dentists shall set and present fair and reasonable fees, taking into consideration the time needed for a treatment, its difficulty or any exceptional skills needed.
3. Give patients the information needed to understand fees and payment methods.

4. If a treatment plan needs to be modified, the dentist shall inform the patient immediately if any additional fees are involved.
5. Make all reasonable efforts to communicate with your patients in a way that ensures that the information exchanged is understood.

Fully informed consent requires good communication.

6. Inform your patient or the responsible person of the scope and methods of treatment justified by the patient's condition and their costs and get their agreement.
7. Inform the patient as soon as possible of any complication or incident that occurs and provide the patient with the care required and the financial implications.
8. Respect the patient's right to accept or refuse any recommended dental care.
9. Respect the autonomy of minors who are authorized to give their consent for treatment.

A patient aged sixteen (16) or older has the same rights as an adult with respect to all aspects of medical care, including consent for or refusal of a treatment and confidentiality. A child under sixteen years of age has the same rights if the dentist believes the child to be capable of consenting to the treatment and if the treatment is in the child's interest.

10. Agree to reasonable requests from your patients who wish to obtain a second opinion from a dentist or specialist of their choice.
11. When the intentions of an incompetent patient are unknown and in the absence of any official mechanism for making decisions on treatment, perform the acts deemed to be in compliance with the patient's values or, if the patient's values are not known, in the patient's best interests.
12. Dentists shall maintain their professional independence and avoid any situation involving a conflict of interest. Should a conflict of interest occur, dentists shall cease treatment, advise the patient and ask whether the patient authorizes them to continue.

Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality

1. Protect your patients' *Personal Health Information*.
2. Provide patients with reasonable information, taking into account the circumstances, on the reason for collection, use and disclosure of personal information on their health.

3. Know your patients' rights with respect to the collection, use, disclosure and accessibility of personal information on their dental health; ensure that this information is recorded correctly.
4. In public, refrain from discussing patients or making comments about them that could be reasonably deemed to reveal confidential information about them or to allow others to identify them.
5. Disclose your patients' *Personal Health Information* to a third party only with the patients' consent, or when required by law, for example, when maintaining confidentiality risks causing serious injury to third parties or, in the case of incompetent patients, to the patients themselves. As well, all reasonable steps must be taken to advise patients of any breach in the usual requirements of confidentiality.
6. On the patient's request, provide to the patient or a third party a copy of the patient's dental chart, unless there is a convincing reason to believe that the information in the chart will cause serious injury to the patient or to someone else.
7. Dentists shall respect the secrecy of all confidential information. Dentists may be released from such secrecy with the patient's authorization or if ordered by law.
8. Dentists shall ensure that their staff respect professional confidentiality.

Responsibilities Toward the NBDS and Your Colleagues

1. Dentists shall reply as soon as possible to any correspondence from the Registrar's office.
2. Dentists shall not betray the good faith of a colleague or be guilty of an abuse of trust.
3. When consulted by a colleague, provide your substantiated opinion and your recommendations, confirmed in writing, as soon as possible.
4. Dentists and their staff shall take all reasonable means to enforce the *Dental Act* of NB, as well as the NBDS's bylaws, standards and guidelines.
5. Assume the responsibility to present the general positions of the profession in interpreting scientific knowledge to the public; when an opinion contrary to the general opinion of the profession is presented, this must be specified.

The public must be protected from rash opinions.

Responsibilities Toward the Profession

1. **Recognize that self-regulation of the profession is a privilege and that each dentist has a responsibility to constantly deserve this privilege and to support its institutions.**
2. Be willing to teach students of dental medicine, residents, other colleagues and other health professionals, and to learn from them.
3. Refrain from damaging the reputation of colleagues for personal reasons, but report to the proper authorities any unprofessional conduct by colleagues.
4. Be willing to participate in peer critical reviews and to submit to them yourself. Establish links, contracts and agreements only when you can maintain your professional integrity and protect your patients' interests.
5. Refrain from promoting, as a member of the dental profession, any service (except your own) or product for your personal gain.
6. Do not hide from colleagues the diagnostic or therapeutic agents and procedures that you use.
7. Treat your colleagues with dignity and as someone worthy of respect.
8. Dentists shall provide appropriate supervision for their employees.
9. Avoid any false representation of your level of competence.
10. Show integrity.
11. Make sure that you have an emergency service system in place to give patients access.

Responsibilities Toward Yourself

1. Ask for help from colleagues and duly qualified professionals when experiencing personal problems that may negatively affect the services that you provide to patients, society or the profession.
2. Protect and improve your own health and wellbeing. To this end, identify the stress factors in your professional and personal life that can be managed. Develop and adopt adequate stress management strategies.