NSRDDA

Nova Scotia Regulator of Dentistry and Dental Assisting

Code of Ethics

1.0 Preamble

1.1 This Code of Ethics is a practice standard that applies to all registrants of the Nova Scotia Regulator of Dentistry and Dental Assisting (NSRDDA). Failure to meet this standard represents unprofessional conduct and risk to the public's trust in dentistry and dental assisting.

1.2 The Code of Ethics provides direction for ethical practice and behaviour and serves as a source for education, reflection remediation and public awareness. It outlines key principles and standards that apply to professional ethical conduct that align with the NSRDDA mandate and registrants' responsibilities to protect the safety of patients and to maintain the public's trust and confidence in the practices of dentistry and dental assisting. These responsibilities are guided by the overarching ethical principles to:

a) put patients' needs and interests first (respect for autonomy),

b) provide benefit (beneficence),

c) do no harm (non-maleficence),

d) be fair (justice), and

e) be truthful (veracity).

2.0 Responsibilities to Patients

2.1 Registrants must:

a) act foremost for the well-being and benefit of the patient,

b) provide care with respect for human rights and dignity and without discrimination or unjustified personal bias or reason,

c) provide fair comment and informed opinion of a patient's oral health,

d) obtain informed consent by providing the requisite information to enable patients to make meaningful choices based on their own understanding of their own best interest,

e) provide quality care within the appropriate scope of practice and in accordance with professional standards,

f) disclose harm and take appropriate steps to minimize harm resulting from an adverse event,

g) keep professional and clinical knowledge current,

h) be responsible for treatment,

i) establish and maintain accurate records of medical-dental history, clinical findings, diagnosis, treatment planning, informed consent, and treatment for each patient,

j) ensure that artificial intelligence technology use is appropriate, disclosed, and transparent,

k) keep patient information in strict confidence,

l) acknowledge limitations and refer to others more qualified when appropriate,

m) assign duties, procedures and referrals only to persons qualified by skill, training and licensure,

n) accept duties, procedures and referrals only if qualified by skill, training and licensure,

o) be responsible for maintaining safety and appropriate professional boundaries and demeanor in the workplace,

p) make reasonable efforts to arrange for continuity of patient care during practice interruptions,

q) make reasonable efforts to provide emergency care for patients of record experiencing pain, bleeding, or infection, and

r) inform patients of changes in clinician oversight and custodianship of records.

3.0 Responsibilities to the Public

3.1 Registrants must:

a) cooperate with regulatory processes of the NSRDDA as well as those of other health regulators

b) represent personal academic credentials and education within NSRDDA recognized registration, licensing, and permitting parameters,

c) respect and support the public's right to a free choice of oral health care professional,

d) establish justifiable fees for professional services,

e) ensure that service claims to third party insurers and programs reflect accurate and appropriate billing practices,

f) maintain personal, professional, clinical and legal responsibilities when engaging in contractual relationships with external organizations or interested parties,

g) ensure that research involving patients meets relevant established standards and policy,

h) inform the NSRDDA registrar of any injury, dependency, infection or other condition that affects a registrant's ability to practice safely and competently,

i) inform the NSRDDA registrar of colleagues who fail to provide treatment in accordance with currently accepted professional standards,

j) refrain from unjustifiable disparaging of colleagues,

k) conduct promotional activity in accordance with acceptable professional standards, and

l) avoid inducements and other coercive activities or arrangements in interactions with patients and the public.

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The development of this practice standard was informed by *Principles of Biomedical Ethics* (Beauchamp and Childress, Oxford University Press) and *Code of Ethics* documents established for provincial regulators of dentistry and dental assisting throughout Canada.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

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