

AMA Code of Medical Ethics

1.1.3 Patient Rights

The health and well-being of patients depends on a collaborative effort between patient and physician in a mutually respectful alliance. Patients contribute to this alliance when they fulfill responsibilities they have, to seek care and to be candid with their physicians.

Physicians can best contribute to a mutually respectful alliance with patients by serving as their patients' advocates and by respecting patients' rights. These include the right:

- (a) To courtesy, respect, dignity, and timely, responsive attention to his or her needs.
- (b) To receive information from their physicians and to have opportunity to discuss the benefits, risks, and costs of appropriate treatment alternatives, including the risks, benefits, and costs of forgoing treatment. Patients should be able to expect that their physicians will provide guidance about what they consider the optimal course of action for the patient based on the physician's objective professional judgment.
- (c) To ask questions about their health status or recommended treatment when they do not fully understand what has been described and to have their questions answered.
- (d) To make decisions about the care the physician recommends and to have those decisions respected. A patient who has decision-making capacity may accept or refuse any recommended medical intervention.
- (e) To have the physician and other staff respect the patient's privacy and confidentiality.
- (f) To obtain copies or summaries of their medical records.
- (g) To obtain a second opinion.
- (h) To be advised of any conflicts of interest their physician may have in respect to their care.
- (i) To continuity of care. Patients should be able to expect that their physician will cooperate in coordinating medically indicated care with other health care professionals, and that the physician will not discontinue treating them when further treatment is medically indicated without giving them sufficient notice and reasonable assistance in making alternative arrangements for care.

AMA Principles of Medical Ethics: I,IV,V,VIII,IX