ALBERTA COLLEGE OF PARAMEDICS

CODE OF ETHICS

Revised and effective: December 2019 Adopted: September 2016
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PURPOSE

Through the principles and responsibilities, the Code of Ethics sets out the basic ethical commitments that guides all regulated members of the paramedic profession in Alberta.

For regulated members of the profession, the Code of Ethics establishes the expectations for responsible, ethical conduct with patients, the public, the profession and oneself. For the public, the Code of Ethics provides clarity on the ethical values and responsibilities the paramedic profession expects of its members and demonstrates the profession’s accountability to the societal expectation of ethical practice and the commitment to furthering public trust.

USE OF THE CODE OF ETHICS

While the Code of Ethics cannot tell regulated members of every ethical obligation, it does affirm and clarify principles that define professional, ethical conduct.

The Code of Ethics must always be used in conjunction with all applicable federal and provincial laws and legislation; along with the profession’s regulation and Standards of Practice, and any other policies and procedures that regulate professional practice.

In addition to outlining the basic commitments required of every regulated member of the Alberta College of Paramedics (College), the Code of Ethics should serve as a source for education and reflection for members to consider their own conduct and strive for improvement wherever possible.

ENFORCEABILITY

The Code of Ethics that follows sets forth the ethical responsibilities that, along with the Standards of Practice, are binding on all regulated members of the paramedic profession. Violations of the Code of Ethics may constitute unprofessional conduct and may result in disciplinary action.

Any public individual who believes a regulated member of the College has acted unethically or in an unskilled manner may bring the matter to the attention of the Complaints Director, to be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Health Professions Act.
PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

The following ethical principles form the foundation for ethical behaviour and decision-making of regulated members.

A. **Autonomy:** acknowledging the rights of others to self-determination and autonomy in making choices and informed decisions

B. **Beneficence:** acting in ways that are intended to improve the health and welfare of others

C. **Competence:** providing service to patients through the delivery of quality care in a competent fashion

D. **Non-maleficence:** practicing with the intent of doing no harm or minimizing any potential harm that could occur

E. **Veracity:** being truthful in all professional matters, appropriately disclosing and not misrepresenting information in their dealings with patients, public, other healthcare providers and the College

Additional professional values that help support ethical conduct in the profession include:

- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Dignity
- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Transparency

RESPONSIBILITIES

The following responsibilities work in conjunction with the above principles and values to further guide ethical decision-making.

1. Responsibility to Patients
2. Responsibility to the Public
3. Responsibility to Oneself
4. Responsibility to the Profession
1.0 Responsibility to Patients

1.1 Act respectfully in a manner that upholds the patient’s dignity, safety, privacy, confidentiality and decision-making; taking into account the patient’s rights, needs, culture and environmental context

1.2 Advocate in the best interest of the patient to receive fair and equitable access to healthcare services and consulting with others for the benefit of the patient

1.3 Work collaboratively with a patient, their family and members of the patient’s healthcare team, consulting with other healthcare providers when necessary

1.4 Maintain currency through continued competence, complying with the College’s Continuing Competence program to ensure they provide treatment in accordance with current standards

1.5 Ensure appropriate professional boundaries by respecting the inherent power imbalance that occurs between a patient and their healthcare provider, maintaining clear separation between professional and personal relationships

1.6 Communicate professionally and responsibly by being open, honest and respectful with patients at all times, adhering to privacy and confidentiality legislation, regardless of medium (in-person, telephone, online, social media, SMS, etc.)

2.0 Responsibility to the Public

2.1 Impartiality by respecting the rights and diversity of all individuals to access healthcare, regardless of their demographic or socioeconomic factors, values, beliefs, gender identity and expression, and/or cultures

2.2 Advocacy in the interest of the public to receive fair and equitable access to needed healthcare services and resources

2.3 Report suspected abuse by being familiar with the signs of abuse and all legislated requirements to report abuse, such as child abuse under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act and/or sexual abuse and sexual misconduct under the Health Professions Act

2.4 Correct representation of qualifications in all circumstances by representing their designation, registration and practice permit status, as well as any conditions on their practice permit truthfully and without any misrepresentation

2.5 Recognize social determinants (community, society and the environment) are important factors in the health of individuals and should be considered in the provision of care
3.0 Responsibility to Oneself

3.1 Recognize professional limitations by understanding their capabilities and limitations, and performing only the functions that fall within their scope of practice for which they have been educated and trained and in which they possess the required knowledge, skills and judgement.

3.2 Practice in accordance with legislation including the Health Professions Act of Alberta, Paramedic Professions Regulation, Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice and all other documents and policies used to govern the paramedic profession.

3.3 Maintain good character and reputation by fostering a professional identity, following the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, and demonstrating honesty and integrity in all interactions.

3.4 Maintain mental and physical capacity by identifying and seeking treatment for any serious injury; mental, behavioural or physical condition; or any other condition that has immediately or may affect over time, their ability to practice safely and competently, and refraining from practicing while their ability to provide appropriate and competent care is compromised.

4.0 Responsibility to the Profession

4.1 Support self-regulation of the profession by recognizing that self-regulation of the profession is a privilege and each member has a continuing responsibility to merit this privilege.

4.2 Maintain professional awareness by being familiar with, and adhering to, the College’s Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, position statements and guidance documents.

4.3 Enhance the profession by committing to maintaining and improving the reputation and standing of the paramedic profession, inspiring public trust and confidence through ethical, professional conduct.

4.4 Self-report infractions and incapacity to the College when a regulated member identifies any deviation from the Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice or any other policies or procedures that govern the paramedic profession, or identifies any area of physical incapacity that could reasonably impair the ability to practice safely and competently.

4.5 Respect professional relationships by maintaining professional behaviour and being respectful in interactions with all healthcare colleagues, employees and students, and refraining from conduct that could be considered harassment, abuse or discrimination.

4.6 Duty to report unethical behaviour to the appropriate healthcare college when a regulated member who has reasonable grounds to believe that a regulated member of the Alberta College of Paramedics or any other regulated healthcare college has performed their duties unethically.

4.7 Collaborate with the Alberta College of Paramedics to fulfill all legislative responsibilities.