

## **Position Statement**

# **Healthcare Education and the Christian Faith**

Education in the healthcare professions presents particular challenges in combining education, the profession, and the care of the patient. Christians in healthcare education should look to their faith for support and guidance in addressing these issues.

### **Healthcare Trainees:**

Health professional students and residents are partially trained healthcare professionals. Christian healthcare trainees are subject to the same standards and guidance as are fully trained Christian healthcare professionals (see Ethics Statement\*)

All authority is established by God. Healthcare trainees should respect the authority of attending clinicians and others responsible for patient care. In situations where there is a difference of opinion between a trainee and those professionals in authority, excluding matters of conscience, the trainee should respectfully state his or her opinion and reasons, and should then honor the final decision of the person in authority. If the trainee believes a patient may be harmed by the decision, he or she should tactfully seek counsel from one or more experienced professionals.

Professional trainees should not place a patient at physical risk for the sake of learning, but should seek supervision from others with more experience or knowledge, when appropriate. They should not put themselves at moral risk, but rather graciously decline to participate in any aspect of training or patient care which would violate their conscience.

Healthcare in a teaching setting requires cooperation and communication among many members of the professional team. This presents unique challenges for the trainee in regard to patient privacy and confidentiality. Special efforts must be made in such settings to retain and demonstrate the highest respect for patients.

Trainees should be honest with patients about their level of training; e.g. medical, dental and pharmacy students must not introduce themselves to patients as "Doctor". They should likewise be honest with their professional colleagues and in matters of documentation, never compromising their integrity for the sake of being a "team player". They need to be honest with themselves and with those to whom they report when they make mistakes.

### **Healthcare Educators:**

Clinicians involved in the training of students and residents should exert proper supervision and authority without physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Trainees should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times and should not be asked or expected to expend themselves to the point of endangering patients or of damaging their personal or family lives. Conversely, the teacher should model balance in their personal and professional lives and assist the trainee in establishing the same. Christian healthcare educators should model the demeanor of Jesus in His teaching and ministry.

Residents and students should be trained in all aspects of the well-being of their patients, including physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects of health.

The teacher should ensure that the patient's care is not compromised by the inexperience of the trainee.

If a trainee in the healthcare professions expresses an unwillingness to participate in an aspect of training or patient care as a matter of conscience, that stance should be explored in a non-judgmental manner to ensure that both parties fully understand the issue. The trainee's position on matters of conscience should be honored without academic or personal penalty.

Healthcare trainees and educators should work together with compassion, competence and integrity to enhance patient care and to strengthen professional standards. Following the model of our Lord Himself in equipping and sending disciples, health care education should ensure the excellence of future practitioners and educators.

\* See statements entitled "Principles of Christian Excellence in Dental and Medical Practice," "Christian Physician's Oath," "Christian Dentist's Oath," "Biblical Model for Medical Ethics," and "Sharing Faith in Practice."

*Approved by the CPFJ Board of Directors  
Passed with 11 approvals, 0 opposed, 0 abstention  
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These statements have been prepared based upon and are in alignment with similar statements from the Christian Medical Dental Associations and their statements can be accessed through this [link](#).