

# CODE of *Ethics*

**The dental profession** holds a special place of trust within society. As a result, society extends opportunities and privileges to the profession that are not available to the public at large. In return, the profession makes a commitment that its members will adhere to high standards of clinical expertise and ethical conduct.

The ethical behaviour of dentists is one of the most important factors in the promotion of quality dental care and recognition of dentists as professionals.

Continued public trust in the dental profession and in the principle of profession-led self-regulation is dependent on the commitment of individual dentists to high standards of ethical conduct.

These principles are based on the core ethical values of integrity, fairness, beneficence, compassion and respect for patient autonomy.

## THE PRINCIPLES

- 1** The paramount responsibility of a dentist is to the health and well-being of patients.
- 2** Be truthful, obey the law, and provide care with respect for human rights and dignity and without discrimination.
- 3** Commit to the highest level of professionalism by maintaining current competency.
- 4** Respect the right of patients to be cared for by the dentist of their choice.
- 5** Provide timely and competent care that is consistent with the standards of the profession.
- 6** Provide unbiased explanation of options with associated risks and costs, and obtain consent before proceeding with investigations or treatment.
- 7** Recognize limitations and refer patients to others more qualified when appropriate.
- 8** Make the well-being of patients the primary consideration when making referrals to other health-care workers.
- 9** Never overstate or embellish qualifications including advertising or speech that could mislead a reasonable person.
- 10** Maintain a safe and healthy office environment for both patients and staff.
- 11** Accept responsibility for the care provided by authorized dental personnel.
- 12** Only provide compromised or unconventional treatment with full disclosure and consent of patients.
- 13** Only make evaluative remarks about the work of others after making reasonable efforts to understand the prior treatment history of patients.
- 14** Maintain appropriate and dignified boundaries in the patient/dentist relationship.
- 15** Protect the confidentiality of the personal and health information of patients.



Royal College of Dental  
Surgeons of Ontario

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## CORE VALUES

Core values represent a guide for ethical behaviour for members of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario, and are the foundation from which the ethical principles are derived.

### **AUTONOMY**

Understanding and respecting patients' rights to make informed decisions based on personal values and beliefs.

### **BENEFICENCE**

Maximizing benefits and minimizing harm for the welfare of the patient.

### **COMPASSION**

Acting with sympathy and kindness to all patients in alleviating their concerns and pain.

### **FAIRNESS**

Treating all individuals, patients, colleagues and third parties in a just and equitable manner.

### **INTEGRITY**

Being truthful, behaving with honour and decency and upholding professional standards.

**ETHICAL BEHAVIOR IS THE FOUNDATION  
OF THE PUBLIC'S CONTINUING TRUST IN THE  
EFFECTIVENESS OF SELF-REGULATION.**



Royal College of  
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*Ensuring Continued Trust*

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