

CODE OF ETHICS

- I. A Code of Ethics for professional conduct has been adopted by the Congress of Neurological Surgeons. The Code of Ethics shall serve as guidelines for neurological surgeons in their relationships with the patient, the patient's family, other health professionals, the legal system, government, and the community. The Code of Ethics shall serve as one method of assessing the standing of a physician in practice and may also serve as one method of evaluating prospective Members of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons.

- II. The primary ethical consideration for neurological surgeons shall be commitment to providing optimal medical care for the patient as allowable by the resources and circumstances at hand. No activity shall be undertaken that does not serve the best interests of the patient. In doing so, neurological surgeons shall provide services in which they are competent as provided by training, experience and available resources. The ethical conduct of the neurological surgeon shall include involvement in continuing medical education and training in order to remain current on the latest in medical technology, information, and practice guidelines.

Patient privacy and confidentiality shall be respected and protected by the neurological surgeon unless otherwise required by the law. The neurological surgeon shall communicate effectively with the patient and family during the decision-making process. The surgeon shall act as the patient's advocate in circumstances where the patient is unable to do so (due to illness) to provide relief of pain and suffering or to allow for dignity in dying. The lawful wishes of the competent patient or family or those wishes previously declared legally shall be respected. When human research or experimentation is considered, the surgeon shall provide accurate and honest information to the patient and family to obtain informed consent.

- III. The ethical conduct of the neurological surgeon in dealing with the legal system shall include protection of patient-physician confidentiality and cooperation with members of the legal profession in order that justice shall prevail. When serving as an expert witness, the neurological surgeon shall present reasonable opinions as supported by acceptable practice standards and current scientific knowledge and shall not misrepresent science for legal or financial gain.

- IV. The ethical conduct of the neurological surgeon shall include supporting the patient's rights and privileges as well as those of the physician when healthcare-related legislation is under consideration by our government. When called upon, the neurological surgeon shall provide accurate and honest information to government agencies involved with health care financing or legislation or reform. With regard to the relationship with insurance, compensation or reimbursement agencies, the neurological surgeon shall provide prompt, accurate and complete medical records and information to those agencies. The neurological surgeon shall receive patient care compensation for services he/she actually delivers or supervises. The division of income among members of an organized group may be based upon the value of services performed by each member as determined by group members.
- V. The ethical conduct of the neurological surgeon shall include avoidance of the abuse of alcohol and drugs or other self-abusive behavior. Should the physician become physically and/or mentally impaired due to medical infirmity, substance abuse or mental illness, the neurological surgeon should submit voluntarily for professional evaluation and treatment. In these circumstances, the practice of the neurological surgeon shall be limited appropriately. It is the ethical obligation of the neurological surgeon to approach any colleague who appears to be impaired and recommend treatment and/or referral to the appropriate hospital or regional professional committee.
- VI. The neurological surgeon has an ethical and social obligation to be aware of local, regional, national and international matters that may affect healthcare or the individual rights of physicians and patients and to take action when deemed necessary.
- VII. Neither membership nor full participation in the activities of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons shall be denied any person on account of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. In addition, discrimination prohibited by this code includes not only intentional discrimination, but also conduct that creates or tolerates a hostile work environment by its officers or members. A hostile work environment is characterized by pervasive and offensive treatment of an employee or subordinate because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability or sexual orientation. Sexual Harassment is characterized by unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which adversely affects a term or condition of employment or participation in the organization, or which results in a hostile work environment.

The Code of Ethics of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons shall be revised periodically based on need and the recommendations of the Membership.

Approved by the CNS Executive Committee 4/21/01