

Virtual Mentor

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THE CODE SAYS

The AMA *Code of Medical Ethics*' Opinion on Physician Administrators

Opinion 8.02 - Ethical Guidelines for Physicians in Administrative or Other Non-clinical Roles

The practice of medicine focuses primarily on diagnosis and treatment of disease and injury, but its concerns extend broadly to include human experiences related to health and illness. Throughout their formal education and their practice of medicine, physicians profess and are therefore held to standards of medical ethics and professionalism, such as those expressed in the *AMA Code of Medical Ethics*. Complying with these standards enables physicians to earn the trust of their patients and the general public. Trust is essential to successful healing relationships and, therefore, to the practice of medicine.

The ethical obligations of physicians are not suspended when a physician assumes a position that does not directly involve patient care. Rather, these obligations are binding on physicians in non-clinical roles to the extent that they rely on their medical training, experience, or perspective. When physicians make decisions in non-clinical roles, they should strive to protect the health of individuals and communities.

Issued June 1994 based on the report "[Ethical Guidelines for Medical Consultants](#)," adopted December 1992; updated November 2007 based on the report "[Physicians in Administrative or Other Non-clinical Roles](#)," adopted June 2007.

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