







Module 7

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## Case 7.1: Indigent Care—Volunteering at the Clinic

### Additional Information

The AMA has long recognized an ethical obligation of physicians to assume some individual responsibility for making health care available to the needy. Lack of access to health care, particularly primary and preventive care, has pronounced consequences both for the individuals who need care and for society in general. The objective of the medical profession is to care for the sick without concern for who they may be, what their diseases are, or whether they can afford to pay. This responsibility is based in ideals such as justice and beneficence—the ethical foundation of the medical profession.

Dedication to patients' welfare and acting as patients' advocates highlight the relationship between the medical profession and the public, including the disadvantaged. Without compassion and charity for all who are suffering, something essential goes out of medicine and the lives of its practitioners. The disappearance of these qualities of medical care would be an inestimable loss [1].

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### Reference

1. "Caring for the poor." Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs, American Medical Association. *AMA*. 1993;269:2533-2537.  
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