



Ministry of Health

# **Professional Code of Ethics for Medical Doctor**

August 2019

**Health Care Professionals Council**

# Lao People's Democratic Republic

Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

Ministry of Health

No.0148/HPC

Healthcare Professionals Council

Vientiane Capital, August 02, 2019

## Decision

### On endorsement of the Professional Code of Ethics for Doctor

Pursuant to Healthcare professional licensing and registration system strategy of Lao PDR 2016-2020 No. 2098/ MOH, dated 03 December 2015;

Pursuant to Minister's decision on healthcare professional council No. 0131/MOH, dated 19 January 2017;

Pursuant to proposal and discussion of the medical professional committee.

President of Healthcare Professional Council agreed:

Article1. Agree to endorse the professional code of ethics for medical doctor

Article2. Delegate the health care professional council, medical professional committee to be focal point and coordinate with concerned parties for implementation of dissemination, training on this health care professional code of ethics for medical doctor, also provide monitoring and inspection the implementation of healthcare professional code of ethics for medical doctor for an effectiveness and efficiency.

Article3. Delegate the Ministry of health cabinet office, Health Care and rehabilitation department, health Personnel, health profession education department, the healthcare professional committees (boards) of health care profession council, university of health science, hospitals, center, institution, all concerned parties together to implement this decision on own individual specific responsibility.

Article4. This decision will be affective from the signatory date.

President of Healthcare Professional Council

Dr. Ponemek Daraloy

The document has been delivered to:

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| 1. President, vice president of healthcare professional council each person | 1 set  |
| 2. Member of dentistry healthcare professional committee each person        | 1 set  |
| 3. The healthcare professional bureau                                       | 1 set  |
| 4. MOH Cabinet office   | 1 set  |
| 5. UHS, hospital, centers, each   | 1 set  |
| 6. Copy for filing  | 2 sets |

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## **Professional code of ethics for doctor**

### **Introduction**

This professional code of ethics for doctor was developed for medical doctor in Lao PDR. The main content includes: basic ethical principles for medical doctor, ethics of doctor, doctor Professionalism, doctor practice to patient, practice among doctors and with other medical Practitioners, doctors' practice on the advertisement, and prohibitions for doctor.

Medical profession is a healthcare provider with a conscious effort, accountable for its own behaviour and ethical manners when providing consultation, screening, providing diagnosis, drug prescription, application of medical procedures, a treatment prescription, rehabilitation, including the health promotion, prevention, with the aim to create a condition for the patient to recover their health, healing from illness and enable all citizens to have a good health.

Currently, the scientific progress and medical technology is making a numerous impact on the livelihood of human-being including the circumstance of illness both physical and mental; therefore the medical doctor is having an important and essential role that are mandatory without un avoid-able in the society.

The determination of this professional code of ethics for doctor has a purpose to serve as a reference in the conduct of a doctor including the guidelines in decision-making process concerning the treatment, care giving with safety and equitable; and maximize the benefit, to respect the basic right of patient, their family and society. In addition, this is also to help promote the quality standard of health-care delivery to the accepted level and be trusted.

The recognition and put into effect this professional code of ethics for doctor is the role and responsibility of the entire medical doctor whom are registered. In case of either noncompliance or partial compliance as well as discontinuously with this standard, there will have a consequences on obtaining and renewal of medical professional licence as well as its registration.

The contents of this professional code of ethics for doctor still need to continue a development and improvement in the future.

### **I. Purpose**

1. To define the principle and ethical standard of doctor;
2. To provide as a reference for doctors in decision-making on treatment ;
3. To safeguard the patient, their relatives, medical profession and to ensure the safety of society.

### **II. Interpretation of Terms**

1. Ethical rule: means a disciplinal regulations of behavior that people should behave and to be as a consideration and cognition person;
2. Etiquette: means a courtesy that person should behave in a team such as: medical ethics, nurse-midwife ethics, teacher ethics;

3. Code of ethics: means a summary of identified behaviors of each professions in order to respect dignity, reputation and status of members, which might be written such: nurse-midwife ethics as well as the summary of behaviors which the nursing committee identified in order to be as a guide for nurse to implement accordingly;
4. Moral: means a good behave, appropriate behave which mainly use in the religion meaning and to implement accordingly;
5. Virtue: means the quality of behavior and mental perception such: no lie, devotion, and patience;
6. Conscience: means an awareness of right or wrong, evil, goodness, knowledge of what should do and what should not do;
7. Courtesy: mean a control of manner and communication such: ways of standing, walking, sitting, receiving and sending thing, paying respect, expression, eating, receiving and providing services, greeting, discussion, using words, using of communication devices including behavior in the ceremonies;
8. Right of patient: means the right that has been acknowledged in the civilization country to be as basic and necessary right for living as a dignity of a human and necessary for the development of human character and be a right to be protected by law. Nobody should violate each other right. People born in any tribe should have personal right in term of their physical, believe and choice of living.

### **III. Principles of Medical Ethics**

**Medical ethics** is a system of moral principles that apply values to the practice of clinical medicine and in scientific research. These values to the practice of clinical medicine which is considered as common bioethical principles shall include the respect for autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice.

1. The respect for autonomy is usually expressed as the right of competent adults to make informed decisions about their own medical care: respect for life in each stage of life development. The respect for autonomy is the right of patient to refuse or choose their treatment, the right drug, surgery and others. A person has a right to control on what will happen to their own body. This principle means a patient whom received full information and has decision-making capacity may accept or refuse any recommended medical intervention with informed consent. This decision shall be respected by all parties. To safeguard the autonomy the health care institution shall strictly safeguard the confidentiality of the patient's medical records and to likewise ensure the integrity and authenticity of the medical records. A patient has a right to obtain the information and truth-telling about the status of their illness.
2. **Beneficence:** medical doctor shall make an effort to perform treatment that is beneficial to the patient, but shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.
3. **Non-maleficence:** medical doctor shall consider that any intervention carries a certain chance of benefit, compared that the action is outweigh the possible harm that may occur. Sometimes the treatment is intent to bring a good effect but though unforeseen it may cause the bad effect which is called the "double effect". To be able to balance that the good effect is outweigh the bad effect, medical doctor shall have the knowledge, capacity and ethics along with always developing the professional skill (Doctors are legally obliged to maintain their professional competence or Develop and advance your professional knowledge, skills, and competencies through lifelong learning.), to do so it required to continuously improve the occupational skill through live-long learning.

4. Justice: the three principles mentioned above required that medical doctor respect the principle of justice in every situation of the treatment without prejudice and discrimination based on the patient social status and provide fair distribution of medical supplies when there are scarce resources.

#### **IV. Professional code of ethics for medical doctor**

During a course of a treatment the medical doctor shall perform as follows:

1. Respect the Human rights and human dignity of the patient or their relatives without discrimination regarding ethnic, age, sex, occupation, religion and others, including not breaking the honour and reputation of deceased person.
2. Providing primary assistance to patients in danger by performing first aid in good faith and when they are in the position to do so, without refusing or escaping from that situation.
3. Observance of nationally and internationally recognized technical standards of care in order to help patients recover their health.
4. Listening to the opinion, purposes and decisions of patients on the basis of the laws and regulations and the rules of the medical profession.
5. Persuade patients to cooperate in the treatment, [and] to encourage them for their own interests but not for the interests of the healthcare professionals
6. Being patience, humane, courteous, impartial and no-reactive towards patients and their relatives regardless of their words and behaviour.
7. Perform duties with fairness, consciousness and high responsibility.
8. Respect and regard friends from the same profession.
9. Fees for health care services shall be collected in accordance with the laws and regulations and no additional charges shall be requested.

#### **V. Professionalism**

Medical doctor shall elevate the professionalism as follows:

1. Doctor shall respect the fine tradition, law and regulations, shall not behave in a way that will jeopardize the honour and reputation of healthcare profession, medical doctor shall provide the treatment with integrity and good intention.
2. Medical profession engage in an occupation either in private or public establishment shall respect the patient body, life, human value and dignity; to ensure the benefit of patient, the confidentiality of patients shall be maintained, as well as safeguard the dignity and professionalism at all times, also the respect of the patient's right in choosing freely a doctor.
3. Doctor shall facilitate the patient in all situations. Doctor shall have a suitable behaviour, help each other and support other doctor in dealing with patient. Require to dress appropriately.
4. Doctor shall participate in contributing the information on the Public Health education disseminated through the communication channel to people no matter with any method, shall mention about the information that has been inspected and certified only, shall elaborate in details and consider the impact to people, shall not reveal to public for purpose of its own benefit or organizations that they belong to.

5. In undertaking the research, analysis, arterial blood sampling, organ surgery, tissue, or other part of human body either living or dead as well. Such operation proceeds specifically and only in conform to the law and regulations.
6. In case of voluntary basis, Doctor could agree to act as per asking and respectful to the terms and condition determined by the law and regulations only. Doctor has the right to decline the asking and notify the concerned parties about the condition stipulated by the law and regulations.
7. Doctors shall behave in accordance with the ethical rules, being transparent and shall not provide health-care with a primarily commercial objective by doing various form of excessive advertisement either intentionally or unintentionally as well, shall not authorized any other persons using either name or picture of the doctor in dissemination for such purpose.
8. No doctor shall use the medical equipment or medical products that do not go through testing.
9. Doctor shall continuously improve the occupational skill through live-long learning.

## **VI. Health-care professionals practice towards the patient**

1. Before providing the treatment doctor shall give clear and complete information to obtain consent from patient or their relatives.
2. Doctor shall provide the health-care services in an equitable, fair and quality manner in conformity with the medical science including the principle of disinfection and sterilization and the patient safety.
3. Doctor shall effectively communicate with patient, have a good human relationship.
4. Doctor shall provide the treatment with respect to the right of patient at all times.
5. Doctor shall provide consultation to patients with high consciousness and responsibility, quickness and timeliness and shall record the patient ' s information by using knowledge, experience, intelligence, and by employing appropriate medical materials and equipment, scientific techniques and technology to assist with the diagnosis, to prescribe the treatment and help rehabilitate for the patient.
6. While conducting the examination doctor shall consider the necessary time needed to obtain the information and provide diagnosis by using the evidence-based medical method.
7. Doctor shall explain to patient about their illness after providing the examination, a diagnosis along with the recommendation concerning medical care for the sake of patient information and conduct accordingly.
8. Doctor shall consider the balance between the benefit and disadvantages that may occur from the treatment.
9. Doctor shall clarify, explain about the result of examination, diagnosis, treatment, nurture, rehabilitation, disease prevention, risk, negative result, level of seriousness, complication, the potential in using other method or the unavoidable trend stemming from the treatment.
10. In case of patient refuse the treatment and not cooperate, doctor shall respect the patient decision-making, but shall explain about the impact of such conduct, if the patient is not agree to therefore the doctor is unable to provide the treatment without the patient family consent, except in emergency case, patient is unconscious or unable to contact patient's family.

11. Doctor shall issue the correct drug prescription, clear and legible so the patient and their relatives could follow the proper recommendation, aiming to proceed the treatment in conformity with the rightful method, ensure the quality and the safety of patient.
12. If there is a change to a new facility, doctor shall notify about the risk related to the condition of illness along with sending the medical record to such new establishment.
13. Doctor shall provide convenience to patient endorsed by the health insurance but shall conduct under conditions as stipulated by the law.
14. Doctor have the right to keep the confidential of disease or disease diagnosis from the patient except the risk of infection from other persons or spread the germs to other people.
15. In case of dire situation doctor shall provide the information to patient with precaution, in various stage to avoid the severe impact to patient feeling, their family could be able to know such information, except the there is a refusal by the patient.
16. Patients admitted to the hospital have some difficulty and hardship or suffering and with insufficient food, health-care professionals shall use the appropriate method and rationale to explain to patient and their relatives for the sake of good understanding.
17. Doctor shall pay attention in performing the measure of hygiene and the infection control, doctor shall notify the patients regarding its own and others responsibilities.
18. Before conducting the clinical teaching that include a patient in the action, shall ensure that patient obtained the sufficient information and consent to participate in the activity.
19. In posting the opinion through the Social media, doctor shall consider the ethics of medical profession as well.

## **VII. Practice among doctors and other health-care profession**

1. Doctor shall have a good relationship between members of the same profession to maximise the efficiency of the treatment.
2. Doctor shall clearly communicate in an effective manner during current treatment and participate in the patient follow up.
3. Doctor shall help each other in emergency situation which is difficult and complex.
4. During an important situation doctor shall discuss amongst themselves or with other doctor as proposed by the patient or their relatives.
5. Doctor responsible for the patient admitted to the hospital shall notify their personal doctor or patient relatives after obtaining the authorization of treatment and shall also notify for their knowledge concerning the important decision about the treatment providing to patient without violating the requirement on the medical service delivery at the public or private hospital.
6. Doctor shall work as a team, consultation, diagnosis and patient treatment shall share the clear information with each other; everybody has the responsibility and monitoring the progress of the patient treatment.
7. For the beneficence of patient, doctor shall safeguard the good relation with members of other medical practitioners, all members shall respect each other, respect the right/freedom of patient in what they choose.



8. Doctor shall provide the treatment in a professionally manner together with colleagues and other doctor including when using social media.

### **VIII. Practice of medical doctor relating to an advertisements**

In regard to the advertisement, doctor shall conduct as follows:

1. Not to advertise/disseminate in facility relating the research and treatment that has not inspected and certified by the Ministry of Health.
2. Not to advertise the modern medical products, instrument and apparatus to mislead people on anything that are not in conformity with the medical profession rule or make people over expectatio than the reality.
3. Not to advertise in vulgarity format that is not deferential to people and promote things that is amoral and disrespectful to the fine tradition of the country.

### **IX. Other Practices of medical doctor**

1. Clinical research
  - 1) Ensure that any research you participated: there are an ethical and scientifically assessment, endorsed by the relevant committee and well planned as well as guidance. Research participants shall not have an adverse effect that outweighs the benefit.
  - 2) Provide the information to the research participants related to the purpose of research, source of funding, negative effect and benefit that may occur and their status of participation.
  - 3) Before conducting a research the participant consent shall be obtained after they received the full information and provided the recommendation regarding their withdrawal from the research at any time without any prejudice against the treatment that is going on.
2. Continuously improve healthcare profession  
All health-care professionals are required to continuously improve their knowledge and skills, [and] to take part in training activities and evaluation of their professional practices, in order to improve the quality of their consultations, diagnosis and care,[and] to keep abreast of the latest scientific progress, for the interest and safety of patients.
3. Issuance of medical certificates  
Medical certificates include health certificates, birth certificate, death certificates, certificate of disability and any other certificates issued by doctor as legal evidence, Medical certificates shall conform with the actual facts, the content is right and clear and ignore any relevant information, provide the correct understanding and avoid the excessive comment, shall provide as evidence in conformity with the medical scientific principles,. The standard form of the medical certificates is specified in a separate regulation.
4. Practice of doctor at a Private facility
  - 1) A doctor may have only one private medical clinic shall have an appropriate clinic; its medical personnel possess knowledge and sufficient competent, pay attention to sterilization standard by practicing accordingly to the measures authorized by the Ministry of Health.

- 2) In case that the authorized doctor at the medical clinic dies or is unable to practice, other health-care professional whom wish to use such medical clinic shall apply for an authorization accordance with the regulations, the right to practice is effective only when approved by the relevant authority.

## **X. Prohibitions**

Medical doctor shall have following behaviour:

1. Lack of readiness for performing duties, fail to welcome patients or their relatives, fail to give convenience in each stage of treatment service, fail to be present on duty in accordance with working on duty regime, stop the treatment as proposed by patients and their relatives without valid reason.
2. Taking profit as the primary commercial objectives, holding patients for long period unnecessarily, doing various forms of excessive advertisement to attract patients, criticize or blame the treatment of others.
3. No doctor shall prepare misleading reports or issue medical certificates that are untrue and infringe the laws and regulations, in complicity with a patient or any other person.
4. No doctor shall encourage or engage in the trade of any product or organs from the human body, patients such as: blood, organs, tissue, cells or other human bodily products, whether from a living or deceased patient, except as otherwise provided by the laws.
5. Prohibited premises where doctor cannot provide healthcare service are as follows: commercial premises such as shopping centers or markets, drug stores [and] stores selling medical products, instruments and apparatus, any other prohibited premises specified by the laws and regulations.
6. It shall be prohibited for doctor to provide any treatment service that has not been authorized, or to use any treatment method that has not been authorized [or] cannot be inspected by the Ministry of Health.
7. It shall be prohibited for doctor to proceed, encourage, promote any healthcare that are not in conformity with the medical profession rule, such as unlawful abortions, carrying out healthcare procedures that are dangerous to the human health.

Vientiane Capital, August 02, 2019  
President of healthcare Professional Council

**[Signature and seal]**

Dr. Ponemek Dalaloy