

The Code of Ethics of a Laboratory Diagnostician

The need to establish the Code of Ethics of a Laboratory Diagnostician stems from the development of medicine in which the specialized laboratory diagnostics has been playing an increasingly important role. Not only does it help determine accurate diagnostics which enables effective therapy, but also contributes to the development of wider health service and preventive medicine. It is thus understandable that with the service providers and patients becoming increasingly aware of the importance of laboratory diagnostics, it has gained the status of the profession of public trust. In practice, it means that laboratory diagnosticians set themselves high moral and professional standards. The Code of Ethics of a Laboratory Diagnostician, the signatories of which are individual laboratory diagnosticians through their representatives who attended the Extraordinary National Meeting of Laboratory Diagnosticians on January 13, 2006, will be very important in education of specialists. The Code expresses the moral awareness of the laboratory diagnostics community, and also provides the basis for assessment of professional involvement and moral stance of the members of the Corporation.

The Code of Ethics of a Laboratory Diagnostician is grounded in generally accepted ethical standards as well as the principles originating from the professional tradition. The principal standard of conduct of a laboratory diagnostician involves consideration of the welfare of a human being, which should be protected both in the individual and social context. This principle provides for the obligation to respect human dignity and establishes reference for professional practice so that its primary objective would cover service to a patient in accordance with commonly respected values such as honesty, reliability and competency.

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS:

§ 1

Laboratory Diagnostician shall carry out his/her tasks in a manner compliant with generally accepted ethical standards, the principles of professional practice as well as the provisions of law which regulates professional performance.

§ 2

The welfare of a patient is a key principle which arises out of the uniqueness and individuality of a human being.

§ 3

Such primary moral values as good, truth, freedom, equality, objectivity and justice shall determine the manner and principles of serving a patient.

§ 4

Laboratory diagnostician shall perform his/her functions with respect for a human being , and shall follow the rules of credibility, honesty, objectivity and reliability, working in accordance with the principles of economics.

§ 5

Given the significance of the profession, a laboratory diagnostician shall practice the profession being committed to professional self-governance , development of irreproachable professional attitudes and to continuous professional development.

II. DETAILED PROVISIONS:

1. A Laboratory Diagnostician towards a Patient

§ 6

A laboratory diagnostician performing his/her duties shall be aware that the aim of his/her work are to protect human health and life.

§ 7

Using his/her knowledge and skills, a laboratory diagnostician shall strive to obtain reliable test results and shall interpret them for diagnostic, healing, public health , epidemiological and preventive purposes.

§ 8

A laboratory diagnostician shall follow the principle of effectiveness and usefulness of diagnostic research.

§ 9

A laboratory diagnostician shall, with due diligence and care, collect and secure biological material gained for research. Material collected from a patient may be registered on file subject to patient's consent. A laboratory diagnostician shall protect it against deterioration and usage by third parties.

§ 10

Laboratory diagnostician will carry out tests which aim to identify genes responsible for disease or tests which detect genetic predispositions or susceptibility to the disease, , exclusively for diagnostic or related . Results of such tests shall be subject to appropriate genetic counselling.

2. Professional Confidentiality

§ 11

A laboratory diagnostician shall maintain in strict confidence all the information he/she has gained on a patient while carrying out a test. He/she shall also protect all and any such information from use by third parties.

§ 12

A laboratory diagnostician shall not participate in:

- 1) concealing the results of laboratory research,
- 2) falsifying test results or unreasonably abandoning commissioned tasks,
- 3) plagiarizing scientific or falsifying the results of scientific research,
- 4) making available the results of laboratory tests of a patient, or information on his/her health risks to any unauthorised person, including employers and insurance companies,
- 5) passing biological material to third parties,
- 6) inadequate protection of biological material (from the time of collection to disposal).

§ 13

The results of the tests belong to a person they refer to and may be made available to any other persons or institutions only by that person, or upon her/his consent.

§ 14

Being a representative of the profession of public trust, a laboratory diagnostician shall not disclose professional confidential information , and shall not misinform a patient or public opinion on the matters concerning laboratory diagnostics.

§ 15

A laboratory diagnostician shall, with due diligence and care, provide a patient (at his/her request) with accurate and clear information concerning results of laboratory tests.

3. Laboratory Diagnostician and Laboratory Diagnostics Community

§ 16

Given a dynamic development of laboratory medical diagnostics, a laboratory diagnostician shall:

- 1) improve his/her knowledge through the participation in scientific conferences , training and studying professional literature,
- 2) acquire specialisation,
- 3) actively participate in the initiatives of his/her professional corporation that aim to improve diagnosticians' work and develop the field of laboratory diagnostics through:
 - a) development of quality standards for medical diagnostic laboratories,
 - b) the extension of the range and increase in the level of services provided by diagnosticians,
 - c) the respect for the principle of cooperation with the individuals in other medical professions;
 - d) the implementation of the principle of cooperation among diagnosticians, with particular emphasis on the elimination of unfair competition,
 - e) development of the principles of work safety and hygiene
 - f) defining conduct in relation to environmental protection,
 - g)obtaining resources required for good professional practice deliver the professional profession,
 - h) affecting the financial and social policy of the State related to health care,
 - i) participation in the preparation of the educational curricula in laboratory diagnostics.

§ 17

A laboratory diagnostician values professional competence and presented with problems which exceed his/her knowledge, or any doubts regarding the test results or their interpretation, he/she shall consult relevant experts.

§ 18

A laboratory diagnostician shall build, promote and develop the ethos of his/her profession. Taking care of building social trust has special significance, which is an indispensable requisite for appropriate performance of the tasks connected with health protection.

§ 19

In relations with other diagnosticians, when tracing professional errors, a laboratory diagnostician shall first tactfully address the person concerned, and, in special circumstances, consult an appropriate superior.

§ 20

A laboratory diagnostician shall share his/her knowledge with colleagues and, when in managerial position, he/she shall not impede professional development of his/her subordinates; a laboratory diagnostician shall also motivate his/her subordinates to develop and facilitate the increase their qualifications.

4. Laboratory Diagnostician within Society

§ 21

With regard to patients and relatives, a laboratory diagnostician shall behave with due respect and follow relevant principles of good manners.

§ 22

A laboratory diagnostician shall cooperate with a physician ordering the test.

§ 23

Service provided by laboratory diagnostician shall not be dependent on the additional gratification provided by the companies representing the manufacturers of equipment and medical supplies, by patients themselves, by insurance companies, or by persons and institutions interested in gaining specific results in any manner.

§ 24

In a situation presenting ethical conflict, a laboratory diagnostician may refuse to take part in the activities assigned thereto, through notifying, explicitly and immediately, the parties concerned as well as his/her superiors.

§ 25

Given the use of any forms of pressure by superiors or individuals ordering the tests, a laboratory diagnostician may request assistance and legal protection from the corporation.

§ 26

With regard to the organisation of work of a medical diagnostic laboratory and its management, a laboratory diagnostician shall follow the moral standards, avoiding unfair competition and nepotism.

III. FINAL PROVISIONS:

§ 27

This Code of Ethics of a Laboratory Diagnostician is the collection of fundamental ethical standards to be followed by each representative of the profession.

§ 28

This Code of Ethics of a Laboratory Diagnostician is the source of moral guidelines not to replace the process of a laboratory diagnostician's personal and professional development.

§ 29

Continuous reflection on principles of conduct of a laboratory diagnostician should constitute the grounds for the improvement of moral and professional attitudes of laboratory diagnosticians.

§ 30

The responsibility for the execution of the principles and provisions of the Code of Ethics of a Laboratory Diagnostician is vested in the authorities of the Corporation and, in particular, the members of its Ethics Committee.