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PART I : SECTION (I) — GENERAL

Government Notifications

GUIDELINES FOR HOMOEOPATHIC PRACTITIONERS REGISTERED WITH SRI LANKA HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICAL COUNCIL

❖ Preface / Introduction

- Importance of ethics in Homoeopathic practice
 - Ethics guide homoeopathic practitioners to deliver care that is safe, responsible, and patient-centred. They ensure honesty in diagnosis, transparency about treatment limitations, and respect for patient autonomy and confidentiality. Ethical practice builds trust, upholds professional reputation, and protects patients from harm or exploitation. It also requires adherence to evidence-based principles and legal standards, helping practitioners maintain integrity while promoting the highest quality of care.

1. Protecting Patient Trust

- Patients seek care with the belief that their Homoeopathic practitioner will act in their best interest.
- Maintaining confidentiality, honesty, and transparency fosters confidence and encourages patients to openly share their health concerns.
- Ethical practice strengthens the reputation of Homoeopathy as a safe and reliable system of medicine.



2. Ensuring Patient Safety and Quality Care

- Homoeopathic doctors must prescribe remedies carefully and rationally, avoiding harm to patients.
- Ethical guidelines help practitioners avoid over-prescription, inappropriate treatments, or unproven claims.
- Following ethical standards ensures that treatment decisions are based on scientific reasoning, proper case-taking, and individualization of care.

3. Promoting Professional Integrity

- Ethical conduct protects the dignity of the Homoeopathic profession.
- Practitioners are expected to maintain professionalism in their behavior, attire, and communication.
- Integrity in practice ensures that Homoeopathic doctors are respected by patients, other healthcare professionals, and society at large.

4. Avoiding Exploitation and Misuse of Practice

- Patients are often vulnerable due to illness, fear, or lack of knowledge about medical conditions.
- Ethical practice prevents exploitation of patients through overcharging, unnecessary treatments, or false promises of cures.
- Transparency about fees, treatment plans, and outcomes is essential to maintain fairness.

5. Fostering Collaboration and Respect

- Homoeopathy often works alongside other branches of medicine for the benefit of patients.
- Ethical practice encourages mutual respect and collaboration between Homoeopathic doctors and practitioners of other healthcare systems.
- This prevents conflicts and promotes comprehensive, integrated patient care.

6. Guiding Research and Scientific Progress

- Ethical principles guide research involving Homoeopathic remedies and clinical trials.
- They ensure that studies are conducted responsibly, with informed consent and the well-being of participants as the highest priority.
- Ethical research helps establish evidence-based practices and improves the credibility of Homoeopathy globally.

7. Protecting the Reputation of Homoeopathy

- Misconduct by a few practitioners can tarnish the image of the entire profession.
- By adhering to ethical standards, Homoeopathic doctors collectively uphold the credibility and honor of their system of medicine.
- This is especially important in a world where alternative medicine is often scrutinized.

8. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

- Following ethical guidelines helps Homoeopathic doctors comply with local laws, regulations, and the directives of the Homoeopathic Medical Council.
- It protects practitioners from legal disputes and disciplinary actions while safeguarding patient rights.

❖ The Homoeopathic Oath

- Adapted from Hahnemann's philosophy and Hippocratic values.

"On my honour I swear that I shall practise the teachings of Homeopathy, perform my duty, render justice to my patients and help the sick whosoever comes to me for treatment. May the teachings of master Hahnemann inspire me and may I have the strength for fulfilment of my mission. "

❖ **Homoeopathic Medical Ethics and Etiquette**

➤ **Fundamental values of Homoeopathy**

- **Law of Similars (“Like cures like”)**
A substance that can produce symptoms in a healthy person can, in minute doses, treat similar symptoms in a sick person.
- **Individualization of Treatment**
Every patient is treated as unique. Remedies are selected based on the totality of physical, mental, and emotional symptoms—not just the disease name.
- **Holistic Healing**
Focuses on the whole person—mind, body, and spirit—aiming to restore overall balance and vitality.
- **Minimum Dose**
Uses highly diluted medicines to stimulate the body’s natural healing response while minimizing side effects.
- **Vital Force Concept**
Belief in an innate life energy (vital force) that maintains health. Illness arises when this force is disturbed.
- **Gentle, Natural Cure**
Seeks to assist the body’s own defenses in a safe, non-toxic, and non-invasive way.

➤ **Role of a Homoeopathic doctor in society**

Doctor-Patient & Doctor-Doctor Relationships

Respectful and ethical communication

- *Doctor-Patient:* Use clear, honest language while maintaining empathy and confidentiality. Listen actively, explain diagnoses and treatment options in understandable terms, and respect the patient’s values, culture, and autonomy.
- *Doctor-Doctor:* Share clinical information accurately and promptly, avoid disparaging remarks, and maintain professional courtesy—even when opinions differ—to ensure seamless patient care
Referrals and collaborative care
- *Doctor-Patient:* When a case requires expertise beyond your scope, explain the need for referral, help the patient understand the process, and coordinate follow-up so care remains continuous.
- *Doctor-Doctor:* Provide complete and relevant clinical details to the referred specialist, remain available for discussion, and work as a team to create a unified, patient-centred treatment plan.

❖ **Code of Ethics for Homoeopathic Practitioners**

➤ Core professional standards and prohibited practices

- **Core Professional Standards:** Practitioners must maintain patient confidentiality, obtain informed consent, keep accurate records, stay within their scope of training, and update their knowledge through continuous education. They should provide unbiased advice, respect patients’ autonomy, and collaborate with other healthcare providers when needed.
- **Prohibited Practices:** It forbids misleading claims, exploitation for financial gain, prescribing beyond competence, violating patient privacy, and any form of discrimination, harassment, or unethical advertising.

❖ **Good Homoeopathic Practice**

- **Safe prescribing:** Select remedies based on thorough assessment, appropriate potency, and dosage while checking for possible interactions or contraindications. Always explain proper usage and monitor for adverse effects.
- **Rational case-taking and follow-ups:** Gather a complete history—physical, mental, and emotional—using systematic questioning. Reassess at each visit to track progress, adjust remedies, or modify potency only when clinically indicated.

- **Patient records and documentation:** Maintain clear, dated records of history, prescriptions, follow-up notes, and test results. Proper documentation supports continuity of care, legal compliance, and research or audit needs.
- ❖ **Consent and Confidentiality**
 - **Verbal consent** is usually taken for routine, low-risk procedures or examinations. The practitioner explains the purpose, benefits, and possible risks, and the patient gives spoken agreement.
 - **Written consent** is required for higher-risk interventions (e.g., surgery, invasive procedures, sharing data for research). It provides a formal record that the patient understands and agrees to the planned care.
 - In both cases, the patient must be informed in clear language and given the chance to ask questions before agreeing.
- ❖ **Protecting patient information**
 - Patient records—whether paper or electronic—must be stored securely, with access limited to authorized healthcare personnel.
 - Sharing information with other providers or family members requires the patient’s permission unless disclosure is legally mandated (e.g., public-health reporting).
 - Practitioners should follow applicable privacy laws (such as HIPAA or local equivalents), use encrypted systems when possible, and avoid discussing patient details in public or informal settings
- ❖ **Clinical Practice and patients care guidelines**

These evidence-based recommendations are intended to guide registered Homoeopathic physicians in providing safe, effective, and ethical medical care. Homoeopathic doctors who have received appropriate training—either during their undergraduate program or through any additional training formally recognized by the Sri Lanka Homoeopathic Medical Council—are authorized and expected to comply with the following standards:

1. **Diagnosis and Treatment**
Adhere to accepted clinical protocols for patient assessment, diagnostic investigations, prescription of remedies, and follow-up, ensuring consistency and high standards of care.
2. **Patient Safety**
Implement rigorous infection-control practices, safe medication management, and measures to prevent medical errors.
3. **Communication and Consent**
Provide patients with clear, comprehensive explanations of their condition, proposed treatments, potential risks, and alternatives, and obtain informed consent prior to any intervention.
4. **Administration of Medicines**
Administer remedies by oral, topical, olfactory, or injectable routes, or in combination with conventional therapies, where such methods are supported by training and Council recognition.
5. **Investigations**
Recommend and interpret appropriate diagnostic tests—including blood analyses, ultrasound, MRI, and other recognized investigations—as clinically indicated.
6. **Clinical Procedures**
Conduct thorough subjective and objective examinations, provide medical advice, prescribe medicines and where duly trained and credentialed, perform procedures such as venipuncture, injections, cannulation, catheterization, and other approved management techniques, including emergency care and aesthetic treatments.
7. **Use nutrition**
Authorized to prescribe and administer nutritional supplements, including but not limited to vitamins, collagen, and other dietary or therapeutic nutrients, through oral, intravenous, or any other clinically appropriate route of administration.
8. **Ethical and Legal Standards**
Uphold patient rights, maintain strict confidentiality, and practice in accordance with all applicable laws, professional regulations, and ethical codes.
9. **Continuous Professional Development**
Engage in ongoing education, quality audits, and adherence to current national and specialty-specific guidelines to maintain and enhance professional competence.

❖ Advertising and Publicity Guidelines

➤ Ethical promotion of Homoeopathic services

When promoting homoeopathic services, advertising must remain truthful, professional, and respectful of patients' trust. Ethical promotion means:

- **Accuracy and Honesty:** Present only verifiable qualifications, evidence-based treatments, and actual outcomes—avoid exaggerated or misleading claims.
- **Professional Tone:** Use clear, respectful language without sensationalism or fear-based messaging.
- **Compliance with Regulations:** Follow the rules of the relevant Homoeopathic Council and national health advertising laws.
- **Patient Privacy:** Never share patient testimonials, images, or medical details without explicit consent.
- **Educational Focus:** Emphasize health awareness and the benefits of homoeopathy for general wellness, not guaranteed cures

➤ Research and Publication Ethics

- Follow established guidelines such as the Declaration of Helsinki and local regulatory requirements.
- Obtain informed consent from all participants, ensuring they understand the purpose, risks, and benefits.
- Protect participant privacy and confidentiality of data.
- Ensure the study design is scientifically sound so participants are not exposed to unnecessary risk.
- Provide oversight through an independent ethics committee or institutional review board (IRB).

➤ Handling conflicts of interest

- Disclose any financial, personal, or professional relationships that could bias research design, data collection, interpretation, or publication.
- Implement safeguards, such as independent data analysis or review, to minimize influence on results.
- Refrain from decision-making in areas where you have a significant competing interest.
- Maintain transparency with sponsors, collaborators, journals, and participants about potential conflicts.

❖ Financial Integrity and Transparency

➤ Honest Billing Practices

- Provide clear, itemized bills for consultations, procedures, and medications.
- Avoid hidden fees or unnecessary tests to increase revenue.

➤ Fair Pricing

- Set fees that reflect actual service costs and market standards.
- Regularly review charges to ensure they remain reasonable and ethical.

➤ Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

- Inform patients of any financial relationships with pharmaceutical companies, labs, or device manufacturers.
- Refrain from accepting incentives that could influence clinical decisions.

➤ Accurate Record-Keeping

- Maintain transparent financial records for audits and regulatory compliance.
- Use secure, verifiable systems for receipts and insurance claims.

➤ **Insurance Transparency**

- Clearly explain coverage, out-of-pocket expenses, and alternative options to patients.
- Avoid misrepresenting procedures to obtain higher insurance payouts.

➤ **Ethical Revenue Streams**

- Generate income only through legitimate clinical services, teaching, or approved research.
- Avoid kickbacks, referral commissions, or unnecessary product sales.

➤ **Accountability and Reporting**

- Cooperate with professional bodies and tax authorities when audited.
- Encourage patients to raise concerns about billing discrepancies.

❖ **Disciplinary Procedures**

1. Reporting Misconduct

- **Who can report:** Patients, colleagues, hospital staff, or regulatory bodies.
- **How to report:** Submit a written or online complaint to the relevant medical council, hospital ethics committee, or professional board.
- **Content of report:** Clear details of the incident, date, place, people involved, and supporting evidence such as documents or witness statements.

2. Disciplinary Process and Possible Sanctions

- **Initial review:** The council or disciplinary committee screens the complaint to see if it warrants investigation.
- **Investigation:** Gathering records, interviewing witnesses, and obtaining expert opinions.
- **Hearing:** The doctor is informed of the charges, allowed to present a defense, and may have legal representation.
- **Decision & sanctions:** Depending on severity, outcomes can include:
 - o Warning or reprimand
 - o Mandatory training or supervision
 - o Fines or formal censure
 - o Temporary suspension of license
 - o Permanent revocation of license for serious or repeated misconduct.

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