



Code of Ethics for the Canadian Paediatric Society

Approved by the Board of Directors, November 2003

Preamble

As an organization representing physicians and advocating for the health needs of children and youth, the Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS) must uphold high ethical standards. The success of the organization depends on public trust, confidence and support. The CPS is accountable to a range of stakeholders, including its members, the wider health care community, its donors and sponsors, and the broader Canadian public, who look to the CPS to help make decisions about children's health.

Since it was founded in 1922, the CPS has worked to put the needs of children and youth above all else. This Code of Ethics is intended to articulate that value, and to help everyone working on behalf of the organization—board members, committee and section members, other volunteers[†] and staff—make decisions that are ethically sound. The Code is also an expression of our mission, and a tool to help us continue to work toward that mission.

This code will not provide the answer to every difficult question. Rather, it is intended as a guide to moral decision-making and ethical policy formation. Its aim is to offer guidance as we work to find solutions to difficult issues and moral dilemmas. Our hope is that this code will also stimulate conversation and debate, and contribute to an organizational climate that encourages meaningful and thoughtful inquiry about complex ethical issues.

This code does not address the ethics of paediatric professionals in the practice setting. The CPS recognizes the Canadian Medical Association's Code of Ethics for physicians¹ as well as its policy statement on physicians and the pharmaceutical industry², which have helped inspire some aspects of this document.

[†] A volunteer is defined as anyone working on behalf of the organization without financial compensation. As such, this includes board members, committee and section members, media spokespeople, and members serving as CPS liaisons to other organizations.

Guiding principles

As a professional organization advocating for the health needs of children and youth, the Canadian Paediatric Society is committed to the following principles:

- **Commitment to children and youth:** The CPS strives to operate in the best interests of children and youth.
- **Inclusion:** As a member-based organization, we strive for broad-based decision making that reflects the needs and experiences of all paediatricians.
- **Diversity:** The CPS respects and values differences among our membership and stakeholders, and believes it can benefit from these diverse perspectives.
- **Transparency:** The CPS promotes openness about our processes and policies, particularly about the methods used to take positions on children’s health issues.
- **Integrity:** Our commitment to providing accurate and relevant information—based on sound science and the best available evidence—is one of our core values. It drives the decisions we make, our conduct, and the health issues for which we choose to advocate. We also demonstrate integrity in the way we conduct the business of the organization, ensuring discretion and privacy when appropriate, by declaring any conflicts of interest, and by ensuring that our processes are transparent.
- **Beneficence:** The CPS works to promote positive health practices that are in the best interest of children, youth and families.
- **Non-maleficence:** As an organization of health care providers, the CPS works to minimize the risk of harm that might come from any of our activities.
- **Respect for personal freedom:** As information providers, the CPS ensures that communications respect personal choice, and encourages informed decision-making by telling the truth about risks and benefits, and not distorting or exaggerating facts.
- **Justice:** We aim to promote equity in children’s health, ensuring that we represent the needs of all children and youth, particularly at-risk or vulnerable groups.
- **Effectiveness:** As a not-for-profit organization, we will often be faced with difficult choices because of limited resources. We should ask ourselves how we can do the greatest possible good with limited resources.

Elements of the Code

1. Mission
2. Governance
3. Financial Accountability
4. Public Affairs and Communications
5. Public Policy Advocacy
6. Medical and Professional Affairs
7. Fundraising
8. Human Resources (staff and volunteers)

1. Mission

- 1.1 All of the work of the Canadian Paediatric Society will be directed toward achieving its stated purpose, as defined in the mission.
- 1.2 The mission will be revisited periodically to determine whether programs should continue to exist. The mission itself will be evaluated regularly to ensure it continues to be relevant to the context in which the CPS operates.
- 1.3 Programs and services will have measurable objectives defined in terms of desired outcomes or effects on target groups, rather than outputs or activities.
- 1.4 The CPS will conduct both quantitative and qualitative evaluations of its programs and services in relation to its mission.

2. Governance

2.1 Role of the Board

- 2.1.1 Board members are responsible for ensuring organizational integrity, in part by developing policies and processes that reflect transparency and accountability.
- 2.1.2 The board will be involved in ongoing planning to establish and review the mission of the CPS, to define measurable goals and objectives to achieve the mission, and to evaluate the success of the programs and services carried out in support of the mission.
- 2.1.3 The board will establish policies for effective financial management of the CPS.
- 2.1.4 The board will periodically review the staff structure and the mechanisms for fostering communication between staff and the board.
- 2.1.5 The board will regularly review the governance structure and performance of its members.
- 2.1.6 The board will regularly evaluate the performance of senior administrators.
- 2.1.7 Board members are accountable to the CPS members who elected them. The CPS will have appropriate procedures in place to allow board members and constituents to communicate with each other.

2.2 Composition of the Board

- 2.2.1 The CPS will be governed by an independent board of directors that is elected democratically by its members and serves without financial compensation.
- 2.2.2 The CPS will foster a climate that encourages diversity among the membership of the board.

2.3 Conduct of the Board

- 2.3.1 Board members will be provided with clear expectations, including a written job description and appropriate training or support to allow them to function effectively. This will include appropriate orientation when they join the board.
- 2.3.2 If a board member's professional obligations to the CPS may be compromised by personal or private interests, there is a potential conflict of interest. A conflict of interest can be real or perceived, and arises when judgment or objectivity is threatened. In such cases, board members will disclose their personal interests and, when appropriate, remove themselves from decision making.
- 2.3.3 Evaluation of board members will be conducted on a regular basis, and involve each board member's respective constituents, other board members, as well as senior staff. The CPS will have written policies and procedures for dealing with board members who are not fulfilling their commitments.

3. Financial accountability

- 3.1 Finances will be conducted in a way that ensures both accountability and transparency to all contributors to the CPS, including members, sponsors, donors, government funders, and publications clients.
- 3.2 The CPS will operate with an annual budget that has been approved by the board of directors.
- 3.3 Regular financial reports that accurately reflect the financial status of the organization will be produced throughout the year and made available to senior staff and volunteer leadership.
- 3.4 The CPS will produce annual audited financial statements, conducted by a qualified independent accountant, who is a member in good standing of the

Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. These statements will be published in the annual report and made available to anyone upon request.

- 3.5 Employees will have a confidential method of reporting suspected financial impropriety or misuse of funds.
- 3.6 The CPS will have written policies and procedures to ensure appropriate use of funds, including investments, capital assets, purchasing practices, and contracts.
- 3.7 The CPS will be aware of and comply with all provincial and federal laws governing not-for-profit organizations.

4. Public Affairs and Communications

4.1 Public education

- 4.1.1 Public education, designed to help parents and caregivers make informed decisions about child and youth health, will be authoritative, comprehensive, correct and concise. Information will be clear, and understandable to the target audience.
- 4.1.2 Quality of information will be assured by using evidence-based materials where possible, ensuring peer review, and working in collaboration with experts both within and outside the CPS.
- 4.1.3 If information intended for the public receives financial support from industry, the editorial content will be independent of corporate influence.

4.2 Media relations

- 4.2.1 Spokespeople will be paediatric experts. People who are asked to speak on behalf of the CPS will have the necessary tools at their disposal (information, coaching, training, support materials) to ensure that they feel well prepared to act as spokespeople.
- 4.2.2 Where a personal opinion differs from the position of the CPS, a potential spokesperson will declare a conflict of interest. Communications staff, in consultation with the potential spokesperson, will decide whether that person should speak to the media on the Society's behalf.
- 4.2.3 When the need arises, the CPS will be proactive by communicating through the media quickly, accurately and clearly.

5. Public Policy Advocacy

- 5.1 The CPS will have written policies that describe how priorities for public policy advocacy are determined, and how advocacy positions are developed.
- 5.2 Public policy advocacy activities and positions will remain independent of commercial, corporate or other vested interests.
- 5.3 Financial contributions toward CPS public policy advocacy activities of the CPS must be unrestricted. That is, they cannot be directed toward a particular advocacy initiative.
- 5.4 Should the CPS undertake public policy advocacy initiatives that could involve members' patients or their families, the patients and families must be assured that in no way will their health care or relationship with their paediatrician be compromised if they choose not to participate.

6. Medical and Professional Affairs

6.1 Professional development

- 6.1.1 All educational initiatives must be based on the best possible evidence. In the case of position statements, the level of evidence for a particular recommendation should be described.
- 6.1.2 The CPS will make every effort to reach all health care professionals caring for children and youth, as well as those in training, with professional development initiatives.
- 6.1.3 Understanding the needs of practicing paediatricians is critical to designing professional development initiatives that will ultimately benefit children and youth. The CPS will ensure it has a forum to foster ongoing dialogue with members about their professional development needs.
- 6.1.4 The CPS will develop appropriate recognition programs for paediatricians and others who contribute to child and youth health in Canada.
- 6.1.5 The CPS will have policies to ensure that speakers at professional development events have no conflict of interest with industry sponsors.

6.2 Research

- 6.2.1 The CPS will encourage and facilitate research into health promotion, mechanisms of disease, and beneficial therapies for children and youth.

- 6.2.2 The CPS will ensure that any research it carries out through its projects and programs undergoes appropriate ethical review.

6.3 Member services

- 6.3.1 As a member-based organization, the CPS will make every effort to ensure that members are well-informed about and have adequate input into the activities of the organization. The CPS will also provide appropriate forums to allow members to share their views on CPS activities.
- 6.3.2 The CPS will be aware of and comply with all provincial and federal laws regarding privacy and confidentiality of information collected from its members.
- 6.3.3 Members must have an opportunity to exclude their names from any mailing lists that may be sold, rented, or exchanged.

7. Fundraising

- 7.1 Priorities for Healthy Generations, which receives charitable donations to support the work of the CPS, will be done in consultation with the CPS Board of Directors. By the nature of its relationship with the CPS, Healthy Generations is also subject to this Code of Ethics.
- 7.2 The CPS will have clear guidelines and policies governing relationships with funders and sponsors. These policies will include elements such as the solicitation of funds, the use of funds, and the recognition of funds. Ongoing activities will be reviewed annually in light of these guidelines.
- 7.3 Decisions to enter into relationships with corporate sponsors must not conflict with the best interests of children and youth. Joint initiatives must be consistent with the mission of the CPS.
- 7.4 The CPS will seek corporate sponsors that operate in the best interests of children and youth.
- 7.5 The CPS will make every effort to ensure that the activities of sponsoring corporations are not inconsistent with the mission of the CPS, and will have policies in place to ensure ethical screening of potential sponsors.
- 7.6 The CPS will not enter into any sponsorship that could be perceived as a product endorsement.
- 7.7 Corporate sponsorships will be non-exclusive if the relationship could create the perception of product endorsement.
- 7.8 The use of all funds raised must be at the discretion of the CPS.

- 7.9 The CPS will demonstrate accountability to donors by ensuring that gifts are used as they were intended.
- 7.10 Donors will be appropriately recognized for their contributions, and their privacy respected if they wish.
- 7.11 The CPS will adopt the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy's *Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability Code*.³

8. Human resources (staff and volunteers)

- 8.1 Expectations of staff will be clearly defined. As such, each staff member will have an up-to-date job description. The CPS will have clear personnel policies and procedures available in writing to all staff.
- 8.2 Employee performance will be evaluated annually by direct supervisors, in a way that encourages staff involvement.
- 8.3 New employees will receive appropriate orientation to the organization, the workplace, what is expected of them, and their rights as employees.
- 8.4 Decisions about recruiting staff and volunteers will aim to reflect the diversity of the membership and the voluntary sector, and will ensure that the CPS remains an organization capable of providing front-line bilingual services.
- 8.5 The expectations of volunteers will be made clear. Members expected to work on behalf of the organization will have access to adequate support, whether through training, resource materials, or staff contact.
- 8.6 While it is expected that staff and volunteers demonstrate commitment to the mission of the CPS, the organization will encourage a healthy work/family balance. It can do this through policies that respect the individual's need for family and personal time.
- 8.7 The CPS will develop appropriate recognition programs for staff and volunteers.
- 8.8 The CPS will have policies in place regarding the acceptance of gifts by staff or volunteers.
- 8.9 If a staff member's professional obligations to the CPS may be compromised by personal or private interests, there is a potential conflict of interest. A conflict of interest can be real or perceived, and arises when judgment or objectivity is threatened. In such cases, staff will disclose their personal interests and, when appropriate, remove themselves from decision making or operational processes.

References

1. Canadian Medical Association (2004). “Code of Ethics of the Canadian Medical Association.” Ottawa: Canadian Medical Association. Available at: <http://policybase.cma.ca/PolicyPDF/PD04-06.pdf>
2. Canadian Medical Association (2007). “Guidelines for Physicians in Interactions with Industry.” Ottawa: Canadian Medical Association. Available at: <http://policybase.cma.ca/dbtw-wpd/Policypdf/PD08-01.pdf>
3. Canadian Centre for Philanthropy (2001). “Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability Code.” Available at <http://www.ccp.ca>