

OMA Principles Guiding Member Interaction

Introduction

The Ontario Medical Association (OMA) recognizes the majority of members conduct themselves in appropriate and respectful ways to support one another's work.

The purpose of this document, "*OMA Principles Guiding Member Interaction*," is to provide general guidance on member conduct. It addresses many areas but is not designed to be exhaustive in nature. The intent is to foster a culture of fairness, openness, collegiality and safety.

The Framework

This document is intended to articulate the principles on which we base our interactions so as to ensure a common understanding of the expectations that we have for ourselves and each other.

The overarching principles guiding this document are:

- To act with honesty and integrity, in a way that upholds professional standards.
- To treat all people with respect and dignity.
- To value diversity and embrace inclusivity.
- To encourage a culture of accountability by taking responsibility for our attitudes and actions.

Scope

These principles are intended to apply to interactions between members of the OMA, and to the conduct of members carrying out OMA work. They are not intended to capture physician behavior in the patient context, which is the purview of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO).

Principles

1. Members should interact with one another honestly, responsibly, and in full accordance with the highest ethical and legal standards.
2. Members should avoid misrepresentation or misleading disclosure about their own roles, responsibilities, affiliations and qualifications or that of their colleagues.

3. Members should be mindful of how conflicts of interest can affect decision-making with respect to their OMA-related work and decision making. A conflict of interest exists when a member or their immediate family has competing financial interests that impair objective decision-making. When a conflict of interest does arise in the context of OMA work or with respect to an OMA role, members are expected to disclose it to the appropriate parties to mitigate its potential harm.
4. Members should treat one another with dignity and respect, behaving professionally and being as careful with a colleague's reputation as with their own.
5. Members should strive to always respect an individual's or group's differences and encourage freedom of speech, expression and inquiry. Participation in healthy debate and dialogue is encouraged, as are differing and dissenting voices.
6. Members should work towards fostering a healthy, safe, and positive environment, which recognizes and respects personal value, dignity, worth and diversity. Any form of discrimination, harassment, or bullying against or between members cannot be tolerated, whether in person or online.ⁱ See Appendix A for additional information on harassment, bullying and discrimination. Violence, in any form, cannot be tolerated in the workplace or in any OMA-related activities.

APPENDIX A: Definitions of Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying

Discrimination occurs when harassment relates to any one of the prohibited grounds set out in the Ontario Human Rights Codeⁱⁱ (e.g. race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, family status, disability and pardoned conviction).

Harassment involves engaging in a course of vexatious conduct against someone that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Harassment may include sexual harassment, which is engaging in a course of vexatious conduct against someone because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression where the course of conduct or comment is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.

Bullying is a form of harassment. It is the persistent mistreatment of one individual by another, who, intentionally or unwittingly, subjects the first to behavior that humiliates, demoralizes or otherwise undermines the victim's credibility, effectiveness, and personal well-being.

ⁱ The medical profession, among many other professions, has little infrastructure or policy surrounding the usage of social media for communication of opinion, fact or information. The principles in this document will serve as a guide for interactions on social media that directly relates to the member's role as a physician leader and/or containing any OMA-specific content. For example, it is expected that no abusive, false, defamatory or discriminatory information be posted online. Social media, however, can blur the boundaries between an online presence and an individual's personal and professional lives. The challenges arising from the blurring of these boundaries is beyond the scope of this document, even though we do recognize that it needs clarification.

ⁱⁱ Human Rights Code, RSO 1990, c H.19