

The Internet Healthcare Coalition, e-Health Ethics and the Role of Education

The e-Health Colloquium
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Code of Ethics: Why Now?

- Critical mass and exponential growth
- “New”/“non-health” participants
- Questionable practices
- Bad press
- Legislation/regulation concerns

Ethics Standards and Guidelines

Ethics standards and guidelines for Internet health sites are being developed and promoted by several organizations and quasi-government agencies.

- Internet Healthcare Coalition
- Hi-Ethics Alliance
- HON
- AMA
- Other (e.g., medCERTAIN)



Common Goals

- Focus on ethics guidelines, codes of conduct for web sites
- Education of consumer and content providers
- Self-regulation
- Compliant with the e-Health Code of Ethics



The Premise

**What is needed is a new “CEO”
– Chief Ethics Officer.**

**Whatever the “final code” or the
implementation plan or the organization which
takes the lead, education will play a key role.**

**The most needy group seems to be the
developers of health information and services
on the Net.**



Internet Healthcare Coalition

- 501c3 Non-profit formed in 1997
- International and broad-based membership
- Educational Mission
- Projects include:
 - Tips for consumers
 - Annual conference
 - eHealth Ethics Initiative



The mission of the Internet Healthcare Coalition is
quality healthcare resources on the Internet.

e-Health Ethics Initiative

The Internet Healthcare Coalition aims to develop and promote ethical principles relevant to the fast expanding area of online, interactive healthcare communications, through the consensus of industry, academic, government, patients, and consumer leaders. This ongoing agenda is the e-Health Ethics Initiative.

GOALS

- Develop an international e-health code of ethics
- Educate site developers, users, and the medical community
- Work with other organizations to implement and enforce the code through voluntary programs



Internet Healthcare Coalition's Approach to Ethics Guidelines

- Consensus by open discussion
- Broad membership and participation
- Guidelines for entire Internet health arena
- Ongoing initiative
- Educational focus



e-Health Code of Ethics: Principles

- Candor
- Honesty
- Quality
- Informed Consent
- Privacy
- Professionalism in Online Health Care
- Responsible Partnering
- Accountability



e-Health Code of Ethics: Education

- Define the Need
 - Focus groups
 - Surveys
- Educate the Stakeholders
 - Book
 - Conference
 - Training workshops

Internet Healthcare Coalition Partners

- URAC
 - a leading health care accreditation organization
 - issued over 1,600 accreditation certificates to more than 500 managed care programs doing business in all 50 states
- Center for Ethics in Health Care
 - corporate ethics training
- Others
 - California Healthcare Foundation, Harris Interactive, Hi-Ethics, NMHA



e-Health Issues Focus Groups

- Co-sponsored by URAC and Internet Healthcare Coalition
- June 28, 29, 30; Washington, D.C.
- Stakeholders
 - consumers, healthcare providers, and ehealth businesses
- Goals
 - URAC: health care web site accreditation program
 - COALITION: information for developing workshops and other educational programs
- Results will be announced at the Coalition's annual meeting



Focus Group Questions

- What does the word “quality” mean in an e-health context?
- What is the role of health care providers in the e-health community?
- What are the elements of good online practice required to build consumer trust?
- Should e-healthcare personnel be trained to deal with ethical decisions?
- Can accreditation be a useful tool in promoting quality healthcare information on the Internet?
- What might be the elements of an effective health web site accreditation program?



The New Frontier: Exploring e-Health Ethics

- Co-published by URAC and the Internet Healthcare Coalition
- Explore the ethical challenges created by the convergence of health care and the Internet
- Available December, 2000



Ethics Training

- Developed by the Internet Healthcare Coalition in conjunction with the Center for Ethics in Health Care
- Distinguished faculty
- Based upon the e-Health Code of Ethics
- Delivered on-site or virtually via web conferencing



Purpose of Ethics Training

- Certify People, Not Sites
 - The New “CEO” - The Chief Ethics Officer
- For Executives
 - define and shape a leadership role in fostering ethical climate and behavior
- For Management
 - to encourage management to model ethical behavior
- For Employees
 - to help employees understand and meet organizational expectations
 - help employees achieve “critical distance”



Training Objectives

- Review the e-Health Code of Ethics
- Discuss ethical decision-making in the context of online healthcare business decisions
- Discuss how to recognize and respond to ethical concerns and dilemmas through case studies

The Ethical e-Health Employee

- Ethics training gives employees “leverage” by giving them tools for critical thinking
- Gives employees a “voice” against dishonest or self-serving managers
- Ethically-trained employees bring their culture to their next employer and spread good ethical practices rather than bad practices



Ethical Due Diligence

- Be sure that you and your online partners adhere to the e-Health Code of Ethics or guidelines consistent with the Code
- State your policy on your corporate, product, and health sites and reference and link to the e-Health Code of Ethics
- Sign up your e-health employees and managers for Coalition ethics workshops



Coalition's Annual Conference

- **Quality Healthcare Information on the 'Net 2000:
Establishing Trust, Ensuring Privacy, Enabling e-Commerce**
- When: October 3 & 4, 2000
- Where: Las Vegas Hilton, Las Vegas, NV
- Program
 - Keynote Speakers – George Lundberg, Mark Samuelson, Lee Peeler, Ahmad Risk
 - Concurrent Tracks:
 - Track A: Establishing Trust
 - Track B: Ensuring Privacy
 - Track C: Enabling Ethical, Profitable E-Commerce
 - Track D: Empowering Patients/Healthcare Consumers
 - Power Panel: **e-Health Codes of Ethics: Compliance in the Real World**
(AMA, HON, Hi-Ethics, Internet Healthcare Coalition, URAC, etc.)



URLs

- Internet Healthcare Coalition
 - www.ihealthcoalition.org
- URAC
 - www.urac.org
- e-Health Code of Ethics
 - www.ihealthcoalition.org/ethics/ehcode.html
- Quality Health Information on the Net 2000 Conference
 - www.ihealthcoalition.org/community/program2000.html

