

## ***AMA Code of Medical Ethics***

### ***1.2.6 Work-Related & Independent Medical Examinations***

Physicians who are employed by businesses or insurance companies, or who provide medical examinations within their realm of specialty as independent contractors, to assess individuals' health or disability face a conflict of duties. They have responsibilities both to the patient and to the employer or third party.

Such industry-employed physicians or independent medical examiners establish limited patient-physician relationships. Their relationships with patients are confined to the isolated examination; they do not monitor patients' health over time, treat them, or carry out many other duties fulfilled by physicians in the traditional fiduciary role.

In keeping with their core obligations as medical professionals, physicians who practice as industry-employed physicians or independent medical examiners should:

- (a) Disclose the nature of the relationship with the employer or third party and that the physician is acting as an agent of the employer or third party before gathering health information from the patient.
- (b) Explain that the physician's role in this context is to assess the patient's health or disability independently and objectively. The physician should further explain the differences between this practice and the traditional fiduciary role of a physician.
- (c) Protect patients' personal health information in keeping with professional standards of confidentiality.
- (d) Inform the patient about important incidental findings the physician discovers during the examination. When appropriate, the physician should suggest the patient seek care from a qualified physician and, if requested, provide reasonable assistance in securing follow-up care.

***AMA Principles of Medical Ethics: I***