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Code of Ethics

For BOC Certified Practitioners

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Code of Ethics

Introduction

The Board of Certification/Accreditation, International (BOC) is a voluntary, non-profit, professional credentialing organization that certifies qualified practitioners in the field of orthotics and prosthetics who have met the professional knowledge standards established by the BOC. Regardless of any other professional affiliation, the BOC Code of Ethics (Code) applies to those individuals seeking BOC certification (candidates), and all individuals certified by the BOC (certificants), including the following certificant groups: Orthotist, BOC-Certified™ (BOCO®); Prosthetist, BOC-Certified™ (BOCP®); Certified Orthotic Fitter™ (COF®); BOC Pedorthist™ (BOCPD™); and, Certified Mastectomy Fitter™ (CMF®). The Code sets forth the minimal ethical standards of professional conduct for BOC certificants and candidates.

The Code is designed to provide both appropriate ethical practice guidelines and enforceable standards of conduct for all BOC certificants and candidates. The Code also serves as a professional resource for orthotic and prosthetic practitioners, as well as for those served by BOC certificants and candidates, in the case of a possible ethical violation.

Preamble/General Guidelines

Among other primary goals, the BOC is dedicated to the implementation of appropriate professional standards designed to serve patient welfare and the profession. As set forth in this Code of Ethics, BOC certificants and candidates are expected to protect patient interests, and to act in an appropriate manner, which promotes the integrity of, and reflects positively on, the practitioner, the BOC, and the profession, consistent with accepted moral, ethical, and legal standards.

Generally, a BOC certificant or candidate has the obligation to:

- treat all patients fairly and in a timely manner;
- provide quality services to patients, by utilizing all necessary professional resources in a technically appropriate and efficient manner, and by considering the cost-effectiveness of treatments;
- respect and promote the rights of patients by offering only professional services that he/she is qualified to perform, and by adequately informing patients about the nature of their conditions, the objectives of the proposed treatment, treatment alternatives, possible outcomes, and the risks involved;
- maintain the confidentiality and privacy of all patient information, unless: the information pertains to illegal activity; the patient expressly directs the release of specific information; or, a court or government agency lawfully directs the release of the information;
- avoid conduct which may cause a conflict with patient interests, and disclose to patients any circumstances that could be construed as a conflict of interest or an appearance of impropriety, or that could otherwise influence, interfere with, or compromise the exercise of independent professional judgment;
- engage in moral and ethical business practices, including accurate and truthful representations concerning professional information;
- be truthful with regard to research sources, findings, and related professional activities;
- maintain accurate and complete records;
- respect the intellectual property and contributions of others; and,
- further the professionalism of orthotic, prosthetic, and habilitative services.

Section A: Compliance with Laws, Policies, and Rules Relating to the Profession

1. The BOC certificant/candidate will be aware of, and comply with, all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations governing the profession. The BOC certificant/candidate will not knowingly participate in, or assist, any acts that are contrary to applicable professional laws and regulations. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of these laws and regulations does not excuse inappropriate or unethical behavior.
2. The BOC certificant/candidate will be aware of, and comply with, all BOC rules, policies, and procedures, including rules concerning the appropriate use of BOC certification marks and the proper representation of BOC credentials. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of a BOC rule, policy, or procedure does not excuse inappropriate or unethical behavior. The BOC certificant/candidate will not knowingly participate in, or assist, any acts that are contrary to BOC rules, policies, and procedures.
3. The BOC certificant/candidate will make all reasonable and appropriate efforts to promote compliance with, and awareness of, all applicable laws, regulations, and BOC rules and policies governing the profession.
4. The BOC certificant/candidate will make all reasonable and appropriate efforts to prevent violations of applicable laws, regulations, and BOC rules and policies governing the profession.
5. The BOC certificant/candidate will provide accurate and truthful information to BOC concerning all certification related eligibility information, and will submit valid application materials for fulfillment of current certification and recertification requirements.
6. The BOC certificant/candidate will maintain the security, and prevent the disclosure, of BOC certification examination information and materials.
7. The BOC certificant/candidate will report possible violations of this Code of Ethics to the appropriate BOC representative(s).
8. The BOC certificant/candidate will cooperate fully with the BOC concerning the review of possible ethics violations and the collection of related information.

Section B: Professional Practice

1. The BOC certificant/candidate will deliver competent services in a timely manner, and will provide quality patient care applying appropriate professional skill and competence.
2. The BOC certificant/candidate will recognize the limitations of his/her professional ability, and will only provide and deliver professional services for which he/she is qualified. The BOC certificant/candidate will be responsible for determining his/her own professional abilities based on his/her education, knowledge, competency, credentials, extent of practice experience in the field, and other relevant considerations.
3. The BOC certificant/candidate will adequately inform patients about the nature of their conditions, the objectives of proposed services, alternatives, possible outcomes, and the risks involved, and will discuss these concerns with each patient in sufficient detail.
4. The BOC certificant/candidate will use all health-related resources in a technically appropriate and efficient manner.
5. The BOC certificant/candidate will provide services based on patient needs and cost-effectiveness considerations, and will avoid unnecessary services. The BOC certificant/candidate will provide services that are both appropriate and necessary to the condition of the patient.

6. The BOC certificant/candidate will exercise diligence and thoroughness in providing patient services, and in making professional assessments and recommendations solely for the patient's benefit, free from any prejudiced or biased judgment. The BOC certificant/candidate who offers his/her services to the public will not decline a patient based on age, gender, race, color, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, religious affiliation, or any other basis that would constitute unlawful discrimination.
7. The BOC certificant/candidate will monitor each patient's physical condition in an appropriate manner, including any improvements or deterioration, and will review changes in condition with the patient.
8. Before providing orthotic or prosthetic devices to a patient that require a prescription, the BOC certificant/candidate will receive an appropriate order or prescription from a referring physician or other appropriately licensed and qualified health care professional. The BOC certificant/candidate understands that it is the sole responsibility of the referring physician or health care professional to determine that an orthosis or prosthesis is medically necessary.
9. Consistent with the prescription issued by the referring health care professional, the BOC certificant/candidate may recommend to the referring health care professional a specific orthotic or prosthetic device, design, modification, or service that would benefit the patient. When recommending a particular orthotic or prosthetic device or service, the BOC certificant/candidate will consider, and be sensitive to, the emotional, physical, economic, and social needs of the patient.
10. If changes in the patient's physical condition may justify modification or adjustment to the patient's orthotic/prosthetic device, the BOC certificant/candidate will report such changes in the patient's condition to the referring health care professional.
11. When it is determined that the BOC certificant/candidate is unable to provide competent professional services, he/she will inform the patient accordingly; and, will ensure careful transition of patient care by providing appropriate professional referrals and other appropriate assistance.
12. When the patient chooses to terminate services provided by a BOC certificant/candidate, the BOC certificant/candidate will cooperate with the patient concerning the release of medical information, consistent with directions and authorization provided by the patient or patient's legal guardian.
13. The BOC certificant/candidate will prepare and maintain all necessary, required, or otherwise appropriate records concerning his/her professional practice, including complete and accurate patient services records.
14. When appropriate, or when requested by the patient, the BOC certificant/candidate will consult with other qualified health care professionals.
15. The BOC certificant/candidate will not delegate the responsibility to provide professional services to an unqualified person. Where supervision is appropriate and necessary, the BOC certificant/candidate will not delegate responsibility for the provision of professional services without providing appropriate supervision.
16. The BOC certificant/candidate will not act in a manner that may compromise his/her clinical judgment or obligation to deal fairly with all patients. The BOC certificant/candidate will not allow medical or psychological conditions, personal issues, substance abuse, or other matters to interfere with his/her professional judgment or performance.
17. The BOC certificant/candidate will be truthful and accurate in all advertising and representations concerning qualifications, experience, competency, and performance of services, including representations related to professional status and/or areas of special competence. The BOC certificant/candidate will not make false or deceptive statements concerning clinical training, experience, competence, academic training or degrees, certification or credentials, institutional or association affiliations, services, or fees for services.

18. The BOC certificant/candidate will not make false or misleading statements about, or guarantees concerning, any service or the efficacy of any prosthetic or orthotic device, orally or in writing.

Section C: Research and Professional Activities

1. The BOC certificant/candidate will be accurate and truthful, and otherwise act in an appropriate manner, with regard to research findings and related professional activities, and will make reasonable and diligent efforts to avoid any material misrepresentations.
2. The BOC certificant/candidate who participates or engages in a research project or study will obtain written, informed consent, as appropriate, from all involved parties.
3. The BOC certificant/candidate will maintain appropriate, accurate, and complete records with respect to patient consent, research findings, and related professional activities.
4. When preparing, developing, or presenting research information and materials, the BOC certificant/candidate will not copy or use, in substantially similar form, materials prepared by others without acknowledging the correct source and identifying the name of the author and/or publisher of such material.
5. The BOC certificant/candidate will respect and protect the intellectual property rights of others, and will otherwise recognize the professional contributions of others.

Section D: Conflict of Interest and Appearance of Impropriety

1. The BOC certificant/candidate will not engage in conduct that may cause an actual or perceived conflict between his/her own interests and the interests of his/her patient. The BOC certificant/candidate will avoid conduct that causes an appearance of impropriety.
2. The BOC certificant/candidate will act to protect the interests and welfare of the patient before his/her own interests, unless such action is in conflict with any legal, ethical, or professional obligation. The BOC certificant/candidate will not exploit professional relationships for personal gain.
3. The BOC certificant/candidate will disclose to patients any circumstance that could be construed as a conflict of interest or an appearance of impropriety, or that could otherwise influence or interfere with the exercise of professional judgment.
4. The BOC certificant/candidate will refrain from offering or accepting inappropriate payments, gifts, or other forms of compensation for personal gain, unless in conformity with applicable laws, regulations, and BOC rules and policies.
5. The BOC certificant/candidate will avoid conduct involving inappropriate, unlawful, or otherwise unethical monetary gain.

Section E: Compensation and Referral Disclosures

1. The BOC certificant/candidate will charge fair, reasonable, and appropriate fees for all professional services, and will provide third party payers with truthful and accurate information concerning such services.
2. The BOC certificant/candidate will charge fees that accurately reflect the services and treatment provided to the patient. When setting fees, the BOC certificant/candidate will consider: the length of time he/she has been practicing in this particular field; the amount of time necessary to perform the service; the nature of the patient's condition; his/her professional qualifications and experience; and, other relevant factors.
3. The BOC certificant/candidate will make all appropriate disclosures to patients and prospective patients regarding any benefit paid to others for recommending or referring his/her services.
4. The BOC certificant/candidate will make all appropriate disclosures to patients and prospective patients regarding any benefit received for recommending or referring the services of another individual.

Section F: Patient Confidentiality and Privacy

1. The BOC certificant/candidate will maintain and respect the confidentiality of all patient information obtained in the course of a professional relationship, unless: the information pertains to illegal activity; the patient or the patient's legal guardian expressly directs the release of specific information by providing prior, written consent; or, a court or government agency lawfully directs the release of the information.
2. The BOC certificant/candidate will respect and maintain the privacy of his/her patients.

Section G: Misconduct Prohibitions

1. The BOC certificant/candidate will not engage in any criminal misconduct.
2. The BOC certificant/candidate will not engage in any sexual, physical, romantic, or otherwise intimate conduct with a current patient, or with a former patient within two years following the termination of the patient relationship.
3. The BOC certificant/candidate will not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation in professional activities.
4. The BOC certificant/candidate will not engage in unlawful discrimination in professional activities.
5. The BOC certificant/candidate will avoid any behavior clearly in violation of accepted moral, ethical, or legal standards that may compromise the integrity of, or reflect negatively on, the profession.