



# Alliance of Professional Health Advocates

## The Code of Conduct & Professional Standards for Professional, Independent Health & Patient Advocates

*We present this Code—a common set of ethics, standards, expectations, and behaviors—to promote integrity within the profession of independent health and patient advocacy.*

This is the Health Advocate's Code of Conduct and Professional Standards, an ethical framework on which its subscribers base their work.

1. Health advocates\* practice with compassion and respect for the patients, clients, and families with whom they work.
2. Health advocates' primary commitments are to promote the health, safety, and rights of their patients and clients.
3. Health advocates will, at all times, be transparent in their work with clients. They will disclose to clients their credentials, experience, pricing structure, and any financial relationships they hold with other professionals, businesses or institutions.
4. Health advocates will, at all times, maintain privacy on behalf of their patients and clients and will keep confidential all activities and records according to agreements among them, and any applicable laws.
5. Health advocates will guide and assist their clients-patients in medical decision-making but at no time will make decisions about health or medical care or payment for medical services on their behalf.

6. Health advocates will promote use of their client-patients' values and belief systems as the foundation for their decision-making.

7. Health advocates will, at all times, practice within their competency. Any requests for services outside the advocate's expertise will be referred to someone else who is equipped to provide those services to ensure the client-patient is benefitting from the best knowledge base.

8. Health advocates will, at all times, work within their professional boundaries and will reject any requests or demands that would cause them to violate those boundaries. Such violations may include, but not be limited to, accepting money or gifts as compensation for referrals to or from other professionals, businesses, or organizations; fulfilling requests to perform illegal or unethical actions; agreeing to provide services outside any geographical limits; developing a romantic or sexual relationship with a client or someone related to the client; agreeing to perform any duties without the disclosure or input needed from the client; or any other circumstances that could result in conflicts-of-interest or the inability to fully perform the work the two parties have agreed upon.

9. Health advocates will not discriminate. They will at no time refuse to work with someone due to that person's age, race, religion, culture or ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, or immigration status.

10. Health advocates will continue to pursue education to further their knowledge base, skill set, and practice in order to provide client-patients with the most current information relevant to his/her health situation.

\*Private, professional health and patient advocates are defined as those advocates who work directly for patients, their families and caregivers, and not through an intermediary such as a hospital, insurer, or other person or organization that may have conflicting interests.