

## **Conscience Concerns in Pharmacist Decisions**

**A pharmacist should function by serving the individual, community and societal needs while respecting the autonomy and dignity of each patient. The best practice by a pharmacist is to promote the good for every patient in a caring, compassionate and confidential manner. Pharmacists should discuss and resolve any questions about emergency contraception prior to employment. Compassionate care and conscientious objection are not mutually exclusive.**

**A pharmacist has the right to avoid being complicit in behavior that is inconsistent with his or her morals or ethics. It is unacceptable, however, for pharmacists to impose their moral or ethical beliefs on the patients they serve. Pharmacists who object to providing a medication for a patient on this basis alone, therefore, should take proactive measures so as not to obstruct a patient's right to obtain such medication.**

**The Board notes that although pharmacists have a right to avoid moral or ethical conflict, they do not have a right to obstruct otherwise legitimate prescription dispensing or delivery solely on the basis of conscientious objection.**

**Board of Pharmacy staff interprets this policy to mean that if a pharmacist refuses to fill a prescription for emergency contraception then that pharmacist has an obligation to get the patient and the prescription to a pharmacist who will dispense that prescription in a timely manner.**

Phrases and Concepts From:

- American Pharmacist Association Code of Ethics
- May Pharmacists Refuse to Fill Prescriptions for Emergency Contraception?, Cantor & Baum  
*New England Journal of Medicine*, November 4, 2004, @ Pge. 2008

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