



ABR – Adopted Definition of Professionalism

A Brief Definition of Medical Professionalism

Medical professionalism is a belief system about how best to organize and deliver healthcare, which calls on group members to jointly declare (“profess”) what the public, individual patients, and peers can expect regarding shared competency standards and ethical values, and to implement trustworthy means to ensure that all medical professionals live up to these promises.

How Does Professionalism Work?

For medical professionalism to function effectively, there must be interactive, iterative, and legitimate methods to debate, define, declare, distribute, and enforce the shared standards and ethical values that medical professionals agree must govern medical work. These are publicly professed in oaths, codes, charters, curricula, and perhaps most tangibly, through the articulation of explicit core competencies for professional practice (see, for example, the ABMS/ACGME Core Competencies). Making standards explicit, sharing them with the public, and enforcing them is how the profession maintains its standing as being worthy of public trust.

*Developed by the Ethics and Professionalism Committee-ABMS Professionalism Work Group
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Please Note: This policy is subject to amendment from time to time. Candidates and diplomates are advised to check the ABR website periodically for the most current version.