

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HUMAN GENETICS

Code of Ethics

The American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) is a membership organization that includes multidisciplinary professionals with a common interest in human genetic research and clinical practice. Society members contribute to the advancement of science for the benefit of health.

The Code of Ethics provides an ethical framework for members as they work to further the aims of ASHG. Members act in a manner consistent with the good reputation of the Society. Members do not represent the Society as such. This Code of Ethics does not replace the ethical or legal obligations of individual members as set by their own professional bodies, employers, or applicable legislation.

ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

Members advance both fundamental and applied knowledge in human genetics for the benefit of the public.

- ***Improvement of Health Care***
Promote public health, through the advancement of human genetic research and the provision of high quality genetic services.
- ***Training***
Educate employees, students, and professionals to follow responsible research practice and genetic services, consistent with the highest ethical standards. Treat trainees with respect and provide them with opportunities for professional growth and development.
- ***Collaboration***
Share knowledge in research, practice, and ethics through publication, professional meetings and conferences. Encourage inter-professional and international collaboration for the benefit of health care. Meet applicable ethical and legal standards while conducting collaborations.

INTEGRITY

Members comply with the highest ethical standards such as honesty and courtesy. They conduct themselves with appropriate behavior and attitudes.

- ***Maintain professional competence***
Advance their knowledge and understanding of new scientific developments and emerging areas of practice through ongoing education and training.
- ***Respect professional Codes of Ethics***
Abide by the prevailing ethical and legal norms of their profession.
- ***Objectivity***
Approach professional activities with an unbiased attitude, gathering evidence fairly and precisely.

- ***Accountability***
Act responsibly toward colleagues, government, corporate sponsors, the wider health care community and the public at large. Build public trust through accountability.
- ***Collegiality***
Treat colleagues and researchers with respect and courtesy, based on principles of equality and mutual respect for those with differing worldviews or from different cultures. Share ideas honestly, giving proper credit for others' contributions to their work.

PRIVACY

Members protect the privacy of the individual, especially in light of concerns over possible discrimination and confidentiality of medical information.

- ***Confidentiality***
Respect the confidential nature of all information entrusted to them. Disclosing personal health information with proper and specific authority through the consent of the individual or where there is a legal, ethical or professional right or duty to disclose.
- ***Storage and security***
Maintain confidentiality in creating, storing, accessing, transferring, and disposing of personal health information.

TRANSPARENCY

Members act fairly and provide complete, accurate and timely information to their colleagues, to the public, and to the media.

- ***Professionalism***
Claim expertise in fields where they have the necessary depth of knowledge, especially when interacting with patients, or contributing to public discussion or policy debate. Do not make statements that are false, deceptive, or fraudulent concerning research, practice, or other work activities, or those of persons or groups with whom they are affiliated.
- ***Conflicts of interest***
Disclose any potential conflicts of interest. Safeguard the quality and credibility of their professional judgment.
- ***Diffusion of results***
Report findings, accurately completely, without distortion and in a timely manner. Present personal opinions as such and not as those of the Society.
- ***Public education***
Foster public understanding of the nature and objectives of human genetics consistent with open and responsible use of human genetic findings in science and health care.