

# OATH OF A PHARMACIST

## COMMENTARY

The Oath of a Pharmacist is based on the “Oath and Prayer of Maimionides” with input from the American Pharmaceutical Association (APhA) and the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP). The Board of Directors of AACP approved the Oath of a Pharmacist in 1983 and has made it available to every college and school of pharmacy.

The characteristics of a professional pharmacy practitioner are described in the Oath such that we obtain an understanding of the meaning of the word “professional”. Professionals devote their lives to a significant social value. Pharmacy is a learned profession requiring individuals to dedicate themselves voluntarily to acquiring and maintaining exceptional knowledge and skills in order to provide pharmaceutical care in an ethical context.

The first two statements of the Oath describe a commitment to the service of humankind, the welfare of humanity, and the relief of human suffering as the pharmacist’s primary concerns. Further, these statements emphasize that this commitment is lifelong in nature and should be practiced without discrimination. Specifically, the concept of pharmaceutical care embraces a covenantal relationship with the patient and other health care providers to ensure that optimal therapeutic outcomes are attained.

The next two statements accentuate the character of a pharmacist in exceeding the knowledge and skills of all others in providing pharmaceutical care and services to the public and other health professionals. A life-time of learning in pharmacy is necessary to maintain one’s professional stature and to provide the services inherent with membership in the profession. The acquisition of knowledge and skills by pharmacists must serve to advance the profession. Professional competency involves participation in organizations that support and speak for the profession. Pharmacists promote unity within the profession and enthusiastically accept the responsibilities and accountability for membership in the profession.

The next two statements characterize the pharmacist’s commitment to live a life characterized by faithfulness to high moral standards and ethical conduct. This is manifested not only in abiding and enforcing the laws governing the practice of pharmacy but also in assuring that the laws support the primary mission of the profession, the delivery of pharmaceutical care. Pharmacists must exhibit moral and ethical conduct in their daily interactions with patients and other healthcare providers. Pharmacists dedicate themselves to excellence in their knowledge, skill, and caring because they adhere to high moral and ethical standards. This enables them to maintain a covenantal relationship with society.

The next statement describes pharmacy as a profession where change must be embraced, rather than resisted. Pharmacists must actively participate as agents of change, focusing on improving health care. The last statement of the Oath describes the pharmacist as voluntarily making these vows with full understanding of the responsibility they impose.

Professionalism requires constant attention. The seeds of professionalism are sown when students begin their preparation for pharmacy school, are cultivated and nurtured at pharmacy school; and are brought to fruition and maintained during their careers as pharmacists. Becoming a professional means more than learning the science of pharmacy. It means mastering the art of pharmaceutical care in service to fellow human beings. This service must be carried out with dignity, integrity, and honor as reflected in this Oath.