

# **THE WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.**

## **Proposed World Medical Association Statement On Professional Responsibility For Standards Of Medical Care**

### **Recognizing that**

The physician has an obligation to provide his or her patients with competent medical service and to strive to expose those physicians deficient in character or competence (International Code of Medical Ethics), and;

### **Recognizing that**

The patient has the right to be cared for by a physician whom he/she knows to be free to make clinical and ethical judgments without inappropriate outside interference (Declaration of Lisbon 1981 as amended in 1995) and;

### **Recognizing that**

Ethics committees, credentials committees and other forms of peer review have been long established, recognized and accepted by organized medicine to scrutinize physicians' professional conduct and, where appropriate, impose reasonable restrictions on the absolute professional freedom of physicians, and;

### **Reaffirming that**

Professional autonomy and the duty to engage in vigilant selfregulation are essential components of high quality care and therefore a patient benefit that must be preserved;

---

Statement. 48<sup>th</sup> World Medical Association General Assembly, Somerset West, Western Cape Province, Republic of South Africa 22, 26 October 1996.

And as a corollary that the medical profession has a continuing responsibility to support, participate in, and accept appropriate peer review activity that is conducted in good faith;

The World Medical Association maintains that a doctor's professional service should be considered distinct from commercial goods and services, not least because a doctor is bound by specific ethical duties, which include the dedication to provide competent medical practice (International Code of Medical Ethics 1949).

The World Medical Association believes that, whatever judicial or regulatory process a country has established, any judgment on a doctor's professional conduct or performance must incorporate evaluation by the doctor's professional peers who, by their training and experience understand the complexity of the medical issues involved.

The World Medical Association condemns any procedures for considering complaints from patients or procedures for compensating patients, which fails to be based upon good faith evaluation of the doctor's actions or omissions by the physician's peer. Such a system will undermine the overall quality of medical care provided to all patients.

