

American Medical Association

Physicians dedicated to the health of America



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July 29, 2002

Jane M. Orient, MD
1601 North Tuckson Blvd, Suite 9
Tucson, Arizona 85716

Dear Dr. Orient:

I am responding to your letter of July 5, 2002, and wish to clarify the origin of the AMA's *Declaration of Professional Responsibility*. As with all of its work, CEJA relies on expert staff to research thoroughly ethical and professional matters that are timely and of importance to the entire medical profession. Those topics are brought to the attention of the Council for careful consideration. Often, when a topic appears to extend beyond existing ethics policy of the AMA or would represent a considerable addition to the *Code of Medical Ethics*, it is presented at Open Forums during the AMA's Annual and Interim Meetings, so that the Council may receive testimony that will guide its work. The Council then undertakes a careful review of many drafts of any Report before presenting it to the House of Delegates.

With regard to the *Declaration of Professional Responsibility*, the Council strongly believed that the medical profession needed to make its voice clearly heard in the aftermath of the events of September 2001. The Council wasted no time in supporting the work presented to it by the Ethics Standards staff. The *Declaration* drew from the richest tradition of medical professionalism and the highest ideal of caring for those in need. The draft was reviewed by a group of physicians, humanitarians, legal scholars, and philosophers, and reflected their recommendations. Wanting this fundamental and inspiring message to be heard without delay, the Council brought the *Declaration* forward as a CEJA Report, which was adopted by the House of Delegates at the 2001 AMA Interim Meeting.

In offering the *Declaration* for consideration, the Council has emphasized that the *Declaration* is consistent with the AMA's Principles of Medical Ethics, but does not supercede them, nor is the *Declaration* an Opinion of the *Code*.

I hope this addresses your questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Audiey Kao". The signature is written over a horizontal line that extends across the page.

Audiey Kao, MD, PhD

cc: Leonard J. Morse, MD, Chair, Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs
Karine Morin, LL.M., Secretary, Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs