





In order to foster and protect the individual physician's right to treat patients without undue interference, we must assume responsibility for implementing a system of professionally-led regulation. Self-governance is an important element of political and social participation in a democratic society. Democracy means more than just the holding of elections.

We urge our member societies to take responsibility and pride in self-regulation in order to ensure a high degree of professional autonomy and clinical independence. We are well aware that the physicians of Turkey and the Turkish Medical Association have been fighting hard over the past year to maintain this role.

We share your view that ultimate control and decision-making authority in regulating the profession must rest with physicians, based on their specific medical training, knowledge, experience and expertise.

This dedication is not in conflict with the self-determination and autonomy of our patients, but ultimately assures full clinical independence in patient care decisions.

Yes, self-governance with its regulatory functions may clash ~~with~~ <sup>with</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~rights~~ <sup>rights</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~patients~~ <sup>patients</sup> /P A,-

To ensure the continuing quality of patient care, we commit ourselves to participate actively in the process of Continuing Professional Development in order to update and maintain clinical knowledge, skills and competence.

We insist that the professional conduct of physicians must always be within the bounds of the Code of Ethics governing physicians in our countries.

As National Medical Associations we promote professional and ethical conduct among physicians for the benefit of their patients. And we must ensure that Ethical violations will be promptly recognized and reported. The physicians who have erred must be appropriately disciplined and where possible be rehabilitated.

This is all very difficult and we often encounter criticism from both sides: From our colleagues because we supervise them and sometimes have to sanction certain individuals, and from society because we are sometimes seen as being protective or self-serving.

However we are also under threat, for instance from political attempts to deprive us of our self-governance. The ongoing exchange of information and experiences between National Medical Associations is essential for the benefit of patients. And we welcome the cooperation and experience brought by the Turkish Medical Association to the global family of Medicine at the World Medical Association.

Let me conclude:

Professional autonomy and clinical independence are derivatives of patient rights: to be served by a physician who is independent from undue influence and who can serve his or her patients to the best of his or her knowledge and skills and to the best of his or her ability.

We stand for a responsible system of professionally-led regulation by the medical profession: Fair, reasonable and transparent, and not self-serving.

