



# CODE OF ETHICS OF THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR CERTIFICATION IN HEARING INSTRUMENT SCIENCES

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REVISED MAY 2013

## PREAMBLE

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The Code of Ethics of the National Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences (“Code of Ethics”) delineates the ethical obligations of all hearing health professionals that have achieved Board Certification by the National Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences (“NBC-HIS”), as well as of the candidates for Board Certification (“Certificant”).

This Code of Ethics, adopted by NBC-HIS, is binding upon all Certificants. Strict adherence to this Code of Ethics is required to maintain Board Certification. Further, this Code of Ethics promotes honorable conduct that assures public confidence in the integrity of Board Certified hearing health professionals’ services.

## RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PATIENT/CLIENT

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The Certificant, as a practitioner in the hearing health care profession, shall hold paramount the welfare of the patient/client. The Certificant shall respect the inherent dignity and rights of all individuals.

The Certificant shall adhere to the core values of the profession and shall act in the best interest of the patient/client over the interest of the Certificant. The Certificant shall not engage in conflicts of interest that interfere with professional judgment.

## REFERRAL

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The Certificant shall utilize all resources available, including referral to other professionals, as needed, to provide the best possible service to the patient/client.

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## SERVICES RENDERED

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The Certificant shall fully inform the patient/client of the nature and possible results of the services rendered.

The Certificant shall not guarantee results from the use of any hearing instrument(s), product(s), service, or counseling. A reasonable statement of prognosis may be in order, but caution must be exercised in order to assure the patient/ client is not led to expect results that cannot be accurately predicted.

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## CONFIDENTIALITY

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All information relating to the condition of the patient/client, regardless of the source, is and shall always remain confidential.

The Certificant shall protect confidential patient/client information and may only disclose confidential information to appropriate authorities when allowed or as required by law.

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## DISCUSSION OF THE PATIENT/CLIENT

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The fundamental obligation of the hearing health professional is to advance the welfare of the patient/client. This obligation requires deliberate care in the manner that the hearing health professional discusses findings and recommendations with the patient/client.

The Certificant shall never make any statement to persons, members of persons' family, or any other individual that would cast doubt as to the credibility of other professionals rendering professional services to patients/clients.

In the event the Certificant has questions and/or reservations about the recommendations of other professionals, he/she shall communicate the concerns to the professional involved.

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## MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

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A fundamental factor in the delivery of professional services is the continuing knowledge of the patient's/client's condition. Such knowledge can effectively exist only if the Certificant initiates, secures and maintains as their property, records to specifically include the professional services he/she provides to the patient/client.

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## FEEES FOR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES RENDERED

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The Certificant shall provide full disclosure of the ultimate cost of the hearing instrument(s), product(s) and/or service(s) rendered, at the earliest time possible.

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## DELAY IN PROVIDING SERVICE

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The Certificant shall not unreasonably delay or allow for the unreasonable delay of hearing health services.

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## DISCONTINUANCE OF SERVICE

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The Certificant shall only discontinue service to the patient/client after providing reasonable notice and after all contractual agreements between the parties have been met.

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## RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEAGUES AND THE PROFESSION

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At all times, the Certificant's conduct shall be in a manner that will enhance the status of the hearing health profession. The Certificant shall be supportive of individuals and organizations with whom they are associated for their mutual benefit.

The Certificant shall not criticize—by action or inference—to the patient, the character, qualifications, services, fees, or products of another hearing health professional.

The Certificant shall not offer for sale any Class I medical device (hearing aid) when a direct face-to-face contact has not been established (i.e. sale by internet or mail order).

The Certificant shall inform NBC-HIS of violations of this Code of Ethics.

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## STANDARDS & COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND REGULATIONS

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The Certificant shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

The Certificant shall provide truthful, accurate, and relevant information, and shall not make misleading representations.

The Certificant shall not exploit persons, including but not limited to patients/clients, employees, or interns, over whom they have supervisory, evaluative, or other authority.

The Certificant shall not harass anyone verbally, physically, emotionally, or sexually.

The Certificant shall promote organizational behaviors and business practices that benefit patients/clients, as well as society as a whole.

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## DISCRIMINATION

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The Certificant shall not discriminate in the delivery of professional services on the basis of sex, marital status, age, religious preference, nationality, sexual orientation, or race.

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## ADVERTISING & PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

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The Certificant shall not engage in any representation which is false, misleading, deceptive, or unfair. The Certificant shall not participate in false advertising. The Certificant's communications/advertisements shall not:

- Contain a false, fraudulent, misleading, deceptive, unfair, or sensational statement or claim;
- Be misleading due to the omission of necessary material information; or
- Otherwise operate to deceive.

The Certificant shall only use the NBC-HIS Board Certification in the manner designated by NBC-HIS.

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## REPORTING

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The Certificant must maintain and promote ethical practice by reporting illegal or unethical acts to the relevant authorities. The Certificant shall promptly, fully, and accurately report to NBC-HIS any departure from this Code of Ethics or failure to conform to applicable federal, state, or local laws and regulations.

The Certificant shall report to NBC-HIS any conduct about which the Certificant is aware and that reasonably appears to violate this Code of Ethics. This reporting requirement includes, but is not limited to, self-reporting and reporting about other Certificants. The Certificant is required to promptly, fully, and accurately report the potential violation(s) to NBC-HIS. Prompt reporting requires the Certificant to report the potential violation(s) no later than 30 days from the date of the Certificant's receipt of knowledge.

Each Certificant must fully cooperate with NBC-HIS throughout its investigations of potential Code of Ethics violations.

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## VIOLATION

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Violation of any provision of this Code of Ethics may result in sanction(s) up to and including revocation of Board Certification. Examples of a violation of this Code of Ethics include, but are not limited to:

- Conviction of a Felony;
- Conviction of a misdemeanor related, directly or indirectly, to the testing, fitting, and/or sale of a hearing instrument;
- Disciplinary action by a State Regulatory authority resulting in a Certificant's hearing aid dispensing privileges being placed on probation, suspended, or revoked;
- Engaging in false, misleading, deceptive or unfair advertising;
- Improper use of the NBC- HIS Board Certification credential or trademark;
- Revocation of State Licensure;
- Failure to properly maintain confidential patient information;
- Statement(s) to persons, members of persons' family, or any other individual which would cast doubt as to the credibility of other professionals rendering professional services to patients/clients;
- Offering for sale any class I medical device (hearing aid) when a direct face-to-face contact has not been established, i.e. sale by internet or mail order.

Those holding Board Certification awarded by NBC-HIS pledge themselves to observe and support the NBC-His Code of Ethics. As stated above, by violating any part of this Code of Ethics, Board Certification may be revoked. This Code of Ethics is interpreted and enforced by the NBC-HIS Executive Council.