

PM&DC REINFORCES ETHICS AND PATIENT SAFETY WITH LANDMARK REFORMS

Islamabad 2nd March 2026: In a landmark advancement for patient safety and professional accountability, the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) has formally approved and enforced a comprehensively revised Code of Ethics for all Registered Medical and Dental Practitioners (RMDPs) and recognized institutions nationwide. The revision, endorsed by the Council after two years of rigorous review, marks a transformative step in strengthening ethical governance and safeguarding public trust in healthcare.

Under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj, President PM&DC, the Code was meticulously re-evaluated to address contemporary clinical realities, close regulatory gaps, and align national standards with evolving legal and professional frameworks. In his official statement, Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj underscored that adherence to ethical standards is the foundation of safe, high-quality healthcare and the cornerstone of public confidence in the medical profession.

He emphasized that the revised Code places patient safety, dignity, confidentiality, and informed consent at its core, reinforcing accountability across clinical practice, research, teaching, and professional conduct. The updated framework strengthens disciplinary oversight, ensures non-discrimination and equitable care, and provides clear guidance on managing conflicts of interest while upholding integrity in all professional interactions.

Highlighting the significance of the reform, Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj stated that the Council's foremost priority remains the protection of patients through competent, ethical, and transparent medical practice. He noted that the Code directly addresses emerging ethical challenges and establishes enforceable standards to ensure that healthcare delivery across Pakistan meets the highest benchmarks of safety and professionalism.

A major milestone within the revision is the introduction of inclusive guidelines for the admission and professional practice of individuals with disabilities. These measures align with national disability laws and Pakistan's international commitments, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD), the WHO Global Disability Action Plan, and WFME standards. Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj affirmed that education is a fundamental right and must remain accessible without discrimination based on gender or physical ability, provided that professional competence and patient safety are never compromised.

The revised Code introduces a structured 2–5% disability quota across recognized medical and dental institutions. Admission will be determined through functional capacity assessments alongside established academic criteria, including MDCAT and FSc/IBCC equivalence requirements. Eligibility for practice and licensure will be based strictly on the ability to safely perform essential professional duties, supported by reasonable accommodations such as assistive technologies, adapted training environments, accessible facilities, and modified examination arrangements.

To ensure transparent and standardized evaluation, PM&DC will establish multidisciplinary Medical Fitness Boards at federal and provincial levels. These Boards will include relevant specialists and a disability rights representative to conduct objective functional assessments, recommend appropriate disciplines, certify fitness for licensure with accommodations where necessary, and provide a structured appeals process. Reassessment mechanisms, including periodic review every five years, will further ensure continued competence and patient protection.

Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj reiterated that while inclusion is a matter of principle and law, patient safety remains paramount. No candidate will be denied opportunity solely based on disability; however,

formal assessment will determine the capacity to perform essential duties safely and effectively. Recognized institutions are now mandated to establish Disability Support Units, train faculty in inclusive practices, and submit annual compliance reports, with regulatory action for non-compliance or concealment of safety-related conditions.

The revised Code of Ethics is now fully in effect, and implementation will be monitored through structured oversight, guidance, and enforcement. Describing the reform as a defining moment for healthcare governance in Pakistan, Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj affirmed that the Council remains steadfast in its commitment to strengthening ethical standards, advancing inclusive excellence, and ensuring that every patient in Pakistan receives safe, competent, and dignified care.