

Title: Treatment, including prescribing, for self and family

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Purpose: Provide guidance on how the board views physicians and PA's treating themselves and family, including prescribing

Approved by: Medical Director

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Physicians and PA's often ask if they can treat themselves or family? Can they prescribe for themselves or family? These questions come up from time to time, and occasionally it precipitates a board investigation when the board becomes aware of this practice.

This issue is addressed in two ways by the NM Medical Board regulations (see the chapter on Medical Ethics, NMAC 16.10.8): first, when treating anyone, a medical record must be created, and, second, we follow the AMA's ethics guidelines.

The "AMA Code of Medical Ethics, Treating Self or Family, Opinion 1.2.1" basically says that physicians should not treat themselves nor family members except in limited situations, such as emergencies or for short-term, minor problems.

The full opinion explains the reasoning behind this opinion, to include issues with objectivity, role confusion and power differential.

Per these guidelines, caring for a minor illness (say a short course of antibiotics), is not a problem but ongoing care for chronic illness is not okay. And while not specifically mentioned, one should not prescribe controlled substances.

The entire AMA ethical guidelines can be found at <https://code-medical-ethics.ama-assn.org/> . Again, per our regulations, we rely on these guidelines when assessing complaints about physician behavior, and they may be worth reviewing from time to time.