

WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION DECLARATION ON THERAPEUTIC ABORTION

Adopted by the 24th World Medical Assembly, Oslo, Norway, August 1970 and amended by the 35th World Medical Assembly Venice, Italy, October 1983

1. The first moral principle imposed upon the physician is respect for human life from its beginning.
2. Circumstances which bring the vital interests of a mother into conflict with the vital interests of her unborn child create a dilemma and raise the question as to whether or not the pregnancy should be deliberately terminated.
3. Diversity of response to this situation results from the diversity of attitudes towards the life of the unborn child. This is a matter of individual conviction and conscience which must be respected.
4. It is not the role of the medical profession to determine the attitudes and rules of any particular state or community in this matter, but it is our duty to attempt both to ensure the protection of our patients and to safeguard the rights of the physician within society.
5. Therefore, where the law allows therapeutic abortion to be performed, the procedure should be performed by a physician competent to do so in premises approved by the appropriate authority.
6. If the physician considers that his convictions do not allow him to advise or perform an abortion, he may withdraw while ensuring the continuity of medical care by a qualified colleague.
7. This statement, while it is endorsed by the General Assembly of the World Medical Association, is not to be regarded as binding on any individual member association unless it is adopted by that member association.