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December 16, 2015

Re: National Code of Professional Responsibility for Forensic Science and Forensic Medicine Service Providers

The Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers (AFQAM) Executive Board has reviewed the National Code of Professional Responsibility for Forensic Science and Forensic Medicine Service Providers and has the following comments/suggestions.

1. *Formatting:* For ease of reading, we recommend sectioning the numerical items into principles similar to the *ASCLD/LAB Guiding Principles of Professional Responsibility for Crime Laboratories and Forensic Scientists*. Such as,
 - Professionalism- #'s 7, 8, 13, 14, 16
 - Competency/Proficiency- #'s 3, 4, 11
 - Examination/Methodology- #'s 5, 6, 9, 10
 - Communications- #'s 1, 2, 12, 15
2. This Code of Professional Responsibility has the appearance that it is focused on the forensic scientist. We recommend an additional statement indicating that it applies to laboratory managers as well.
3. We recommend adding the following statements:
 - Management shall adhere to this Code of Professional Responsibility and shall ensure that it is implemented and followed.
 - Management shall ensure there are measures in place to prevent external or internal pressure for a forensic scientist to arrive at conclusions or results that are not supported by data.
4. We recommend rephrasing statements #6, 7, 11, 13 with the following statements so that they are not started with a negative connotation:
 - #6: "Handle evidentiary materials in such a way to protect the integrity of the material." (note: the word "avoid" means 'keep away from or stop oneself from doing'. Forensic practitioners shall never tamper or alter evidentiary materials.)
 - #7: "Participation in any case in which there is a conflict of interest shall be avoided."
 - #11: "Render interpretations, opinions, or conclusions only when they are within one's proficiency or expertise."

- #13: “Reports and other records shall not be altered and information shall not be withheld for strategic or tactical advantage.”
5. We would like some clarification for item #15 which states, “Once a report is issued, communicate fully with investigators, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and other experts, except when instructed that a legal privilege or law prevents disclosure”
- It is not clear if the forensic scientist is to initiate the communication or if the forensic scientist is to openly communicate when initiated by individuals outside of the forensic laboratory.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,



Cindy Moran

President

Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers (AFQAM)

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