



# CODE OF ETHICS

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Code of Ethics of Dysphonia International is intended to reinforce the values and standards of conduct applicable to Dysphonia International and to all individuals who act on behalf of Dysphonia International. The purpose of the Code is to promote ethical conduct throughout the organization and to ensure compliance with the public trust which supports the mission of Dysphonia International. The Code applies to all individuals who perform services on behalf of Dysphonia International, including:

- Dysphonia International Board of Directors
- Dysphonia International Executive Director and all employees
- Dysphonia International Regional Coordinators
- Dysphonia International Support Group Leaders
- Dysphonia International Area Contact Leaders
- Dysphonia International Bulletin Board Moderators
- Dysphonia International Honorary Board
- Dysphonia International Medical Advisory Board
- Dysphonia International Scientific Advisory Board
- Dysphonia International Volunteers
- Consultants who provide services to Dysphonia International

All such persons are expected to read and understand this Code, uphold these standards in day-to-day activities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations and with all policies and procedures adopted by Dysphonia International.

## II. VISION AND MISSION

All actions taken on behalf of Dysphonia International and all statements and policies issued by the organization should be consistent with and in furtherance of the Vision and Mission of Dysphonia International:

**Vision:** The Vision of Dysphonia International is to ensure the ongoing viability of the organization that will continue to lead the effort to eradicate spasmodic dysphonia and related voice conditions.

**Mission:** Dysphonia International is dedicated to improving the lives of people with spasmodic dysphonia and related voice conditions through research, education, awareness, and support.

## III. HONEST AND ETHICAL CONDUCT

All persons acting on behalf of Dysphonia International are expected to meet the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, honesty and ethical conduct. This includes the responsibility to comply with applicable laws and regulations. If there is any question about the rules that apply to activities undertaken on behalf of Dysphonia International, then outside advice should be sought.

#### **IV. PATIENT RIGHTS**

The individuals who seek advice, support or assistance from Dysphonia International have come to us because of a specific medical condition. It is extremely important for Dysphonia International and those who represent Dysphonia International to be sensitive to the privacy rights of these individuals.

Personal data about Dysphonia International members and support group members, or about individuals who seek advice on the Dysphonia International Bulletin Board, through social media, or some other medium must be treated with care and must not be disclosed outside Dysphonia International without specific consent of such persons.

#### **V. MEDICAL INQUIRIES**

When inquiries about a medical condition are received by Dysphonia International or persons representing Dysphonia International, it is their responsibility to give timely, accurate and constructive responses. Advice given by Dysphonia International representatives should be limited to referring patients to information published by Dysphonia International regarding treatment options for spasmodic dysphonia and related voice conditions. The criteria for inclusion of specific treatments are based on whether treatment protocols have been verified by publication of peer-reviewed research and/or whether they have been endorsed by Dysphonia International's Medical Advisory Board and Scientific Advisory Board after evaluating the current state of clinical findings and research.

At the same time, individuals with spasmodic dysphonia or a related voice condition who are in Dysphonia International leadership positions, like all other people who participate in Dysphonia International activities, are encouraged to volunteer information about their own experiences with their voice condition to help support and educate others. This should not be framed as medical advice and the leader's personal experiences should be clearly characterized as such and not as advice from Dysphonia International. In particular, when speaking on behalf of Dysphonia International, representatives should not endorse, praise or criticize specific health care professionals or express opinions in favor of or against specific treatment protocols.

#### **VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Dysphonia International relies upon financial contributions and membership fees to support the organization. It is important for all members of the Dysphonia International Staff and its Board of Directors to use such funds wisely and with restraint, with consideration for the future of the organization. Budget planning and financial oversight should be a high priority of the Board and the Staff, and periodic audit of financial processes and procedures should take place to ensure that financial controls are appropriate and to avoid improprieties in financial accounting.

#### **VII. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Each person subject to this Code of Ethics should avoid all actual or apparent conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest exists where the interests of or benefits to an individual may conflict with the interests of or benefits to Dysphonia International, such as any decision from which the individual could derive personal benefit. If an individual believes that they have such a conflict, they should immediately disclose it to the other members of the organization involved in the decision or action and should abstain from participating in the decision or action. Each member of the Dysphonia International Board of Directors shall sign the Dysphonia International Conflict of Interest document at the beginning of the annual Board of Directors meeting.

In addition, this includes the use of the *Dysphonia International* mailing/email list for personal use, social networks, or business gain. Information received by an individual through a person's role as a volunteer for the Dysphonia International must be directly related to the work of the organization.

## **VIII. EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS**

Dysphonia International is committed to treating its employees and others who provide services to the organization with fairness and respect. Dysphonia International strives to practice inclusiveness and to encourage diversity and equality of opportunity. Dysphonia International should comply with all applicable laws and regulations in its hiring and management of employees and consultants.

## **IX. COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY**

Dysphonia International strives to be a cooperative and valued member of all the communities with which it interacts. This includes the medical and research communities, with whom Dysphonia International cooperates to further research into causes of and treatments for spasmodic dysphonia and related voice conditions. It also includes non-profit organizations that support other medical conditions that are related to spasmodic dysphonia and related voice conditions. Dysphonia International also strives to be a responsible member of the local communities where its individual members reside, and its support groups operate.

## **X. FUNDRAISING**

Dysphonia International's fundraising practices should be consistent with its Vision and Mission and with the organization's capacities and should always be respectful of donor interests. All fundraising should reflect a foundation of truthfulness and responsible stewardship. All fundraising should employ methods which promote the public's trust through the use of accurate and honest representations. The organization should at all times strive to honor the intentions of the donor.

## **XI. GOVERNANCE**

In its Board of Directors, the Dysphonia International has an active governing body responsible for ensuring the financial viability of the organization through fundraising, setting the strategic direction of the organization and overseeing its finances, operations and policies. It seeks to engage Board members who have the requisite skills and experience to carry out their duties and who can devote sufficient time to the organization to properly oversee the activities of the Executive Director and Staff. The Board of Directors should ensure that the organization is conducting its affairs with integrity and transparency, that the Staff are responsibly and prudently managing the resources of the organization and that the provisions of this Code of Ethics are being complied with.

## **XII. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE**

Complaints about an alleged breach of the Dysphonia International Code of Ethics should be made in writing to the Dysphonia International Ethics Committee. This Committee consists of the President of the Dysphonia International and two other directors not on the Executive Committee. Directors serving on the Ethics Committee shall be appointed at each Annual General Meeting of the Dysphonia International Board of Directors.

<b>Approved by:</b>	Dysphonia International Board of Directors	<b>Date:</b>	
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