

# Risk Matters: Treating Family Members



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In general, physicians should not treat themselves, members of their own family, or people with whom they have an intimate relationship. There are specified limited exceptions such as in emergency settings, where there is no other qualified physician available, and for short-term, minor problems. See *AMA Code of Medical Ethics, 1.2.1 Treating Self or Family*. In addition to the AMA, individual state Medical Boards have enacted forms of this ethical prohibition which can vary from state-to-state.

Recently, there has been an uptick in the number of state Board investigations related to physicians treating themselves and family members. Many of these investigations are a result of physicians prescribing Scheduled drugs to themselves, family members, and/or intimate partners but not all of them involve controlled substances. These types of investigations can lead to suspension or loss of license to practice medicine, fines, and

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costs.

Physicians should be familiar with the AMA Code related to this subject as well as the requirements of the state in which they practice. SVMIC members can access links to Medical Boards and other state-specific information [here](#).

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