



# The Ethics of Prescribing Lifestyle Change

Kenneth R. Pike, Ph.D., J.D.

Ogden Surgical-Medical Society  
78<sup>th</sup> Annual CME Conference  
17 May 2023

## Ethical understanding is for:

- Institutional Review Boards
- Hospital Ethics Committees
- Ethics Review Committees
- Parties to Lawsuits
  - Plaintiff
  - Defendant
  - Expert Witness
- Patient Advocates
- Physicians
- Nurses
- Therapists
- Health Care Providers
- Everyone!





- Healthy *behavior* is “foundational to medical care, disease prevention, and health promotion”
- “Tobacco use, alcohol consumption, diet, physical activity, body mass index, stress level, sleep, and emotional well-being” are all pertinent to “lifestyle-related health status”
- Health care practitioners should aim to “effect and sustain behavioral change” in their patients’ lives

**Left:** “What We Owe to Each Other,” as seen on TV  
**Above:** T.M. Scanlon, attending a conference









## Costs of Forbidding Lifestyle Medicine

- Patients are less informed, interfering with their autonomous consent
- Health Care Providers cannot practice to the best of their understanding and ability
- Patient health is harmed



## Costs of Forbidding Lifestyle Medicine

- Patients are less informed, interfering with their autonomous consent
- Health Care Providers cannot practice to the best of their understanding and ability
- Patient health is harmed







## Costs of Forbidding Lifestyle Medicine

- Patients are less informed, interfering with their autonomous consent
- Health Care Providers cannot practice to the best of their understanding and ability
- Patient health is harmed

## Costs of Permitting Lifestyle Medicine

- Patients may feel “shamed” or “blamed” by appeals to choice and behavior
- Patients may prefer one-time or episodic technical intervention over intensive personal change

