

Class of 2023 Oath of the Yale Physician

In the tradition of our predecessors, witnessed by our families, friends, and colleagues, whose sacrifices have enabled us to pursue this profession, we make these pledges:

I pledge myself to the benefit of the sick and vulnerable, to do no harm, as all humans are deserving of our highest degree of care. I will regard those I care for as people first and patients second, honoring the whole person as I care for part of them.

I vow to recognize the contributions of those physicians in whose steps I walk, and to create and share new knowledge with those who follow in mine. I vow to respect the scientific process, recognizing that the practice of medicine is an art guided by evidence and that the scientific understanding of disease is incomplete.

I will undertake this sacred profession with an open mind, learning when I err. I will not be ashamed to recognize my limitations, and I will lean on my colleagues when needed.

I will strive to earn the trust of my patients. I will listen first and counsel second. I will tread with care in matters of life and death, recognizing that I will need to make difficult decisions. This awesome responsibility must be faced with humility and an awareness of my own frailty.

I vow to respect all my patients, including those with beliefs and identities that differ from my own. I vow to acknowledge my biases and to remain mindful of disparities in our healthcare system. I will actively challenge institutions, beliefs, and ideologies that threaten human rights, ethically seeking to further the interests of my patients.

I will not forget that “complete knowledge of a thing can only be obtained by elucidating its causes and antecedents.” I recognize that health extends beyond the absence of disease and is shaped by structures of power, inequality, and discrimination. I promise to prevent disease whenever I can, for prevention is preferable to cure.

I vow to remember that warmth and empathy can outweigh the prescriber’s pen or the surgeon's scalpel. I vow to advocate for my patients, centering and amplifying their voices in my provision of care.

I will be mindful that I cannot fully tend to the wellbeing of my patients without tending to my own wellbeing and that of my peers.

I vow to always remember that the practice of this profession is a privilege and an honor.

With this oath, we bind ourselves together as stewards of Healing, vanguards of Justice, and torchbearers of Reason, on this day and for all days to come.