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TITLE

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ABSTRACT

The professional responsibility model of obstetric ethics governs the referral by the primary obstetrician-gynecologist of patients for assisted reproduction. The professional responsibility model of obstetric ethics is based on three commitments: becoming and remaining scientifically and clinically competent; protecting and promoting the health-related and other interests of the patient as the physician's primary concern and motivation; and preserving and strengthening medicine as what Percival called a "public trust," a social institution that exists primarily for the benefit of society not its members. The first commitment creates an ethical obligation to refer patients to competent specialists in reproductive medicine and who are available to the primary obstetrician after the initiation of a pregnancy, should complications arise. The second commitment creates an ethical obligation to prepare the patient for the referral process with questions she should ask, e.g., about success rates, contraindications, and cost. The third commitment creates an ethical obligation to report inappropriate reproductive medicine services to professional associations and licensing authorities.

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