

Oath of Soviet Physicians [1971]

On 26 March 1971, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet approved the text of the oath and ordered that all physicians and graduating medical students take the oath, sign a copy of it, and abide by it. The ruling went into effect on June 1, 1971. Distinctive features of this oath are; (1) dedication to preventive medicine; (2) commitment to the principles of communist morality; and (3) responsibility to the people and the Soviet government. The Soviet Oath should be compared to the 1988 Regulations on Criteria for Medical Ethics and Their Implementation, issued by the Ministry of Health, People's Republic of China."

(from: Reich WT (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, revised edition Vol 5. Simon & Schuster MacMillan, New York, 1995)

The addition on nuclear war was made in 1983.

Upon having conferred on me the high calling of physician and entering medical practice, I do solemnly swear:

To dedicate all my knowledge and strength to the preservation and improvement of the health of mankind and to the treatment and prevention of disease, and to work in good conscience wherever it is required by society;

To be always ready to provide medical care, to relate to the patient attentively and carefully, and to preserve medical confidences;

To constantly perfect my medical knowledge and clinical skills and thereby in my work to aid in the development of medical science and practice;

To refer, if the patient's better interests warrant it, for advice from my fellow physicians, and never myself to refuse to give such advice or help;

To preserve and develop the noble traditions of Soviet medicine, to be guided in all my actions by the principles of Communist morality, and to always bear in mind the high calling of a Soviet physician and my responsibility to the people and to the Soviet state.

Recognizing the danger which nuclear weaponry presents for mankind, to struggle tirelessly for peace, and for the prevention of nuclear war.

I swear to be loyal to this oath as long as I live.