



# Virtues in Medical Practice

*Edmund D. Pellegrino, David C. Thomasma*

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In recent years, virtue theories have enjoyed a renaissance of interest among general and medical ethicists. This book offers a virtue-based ethic for medicine, the health professions, and health care. Beginning with a historical account of the concept of virtue, the authors construct a theory of the place of the virtues in medical practice. Their theory is grounded in the nature and ends of medicine as a special kind of human activity. The concepts of virtue, the virtues, and the virtuous physician are examined along with the place of the virtues of trust, compassion, prudence, justice, courage, temperance, and effacement of self-interest in medicine. The authors discuss the relationship between and among principles, rules, virtues, and the philosophy of medicine. They also address the difference virtue-based ethics makes in confronting such practical problems as care of the poor, research with human subjects, and the conduct of the healing relationship. This book with the author's previous volumes, *A Philosophical Basis of Medical Practice* and *For the Patient's Good*, are part of their continuing project of developing a coherent moral philosophy of medicine.

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