# Professionalism and Ethics - What It Means To Be A FCAP

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**Dr. Megan Kressin:**

Hello, I'm Megan Kressin. I am a general and hematopathologist in private practice in Austin, Texas, and I'm here talking with Dr. Leilani Valdes. Dr. Valdes is in private practice in Victoria, Texas, and she currently serves as a CAP board member, and she's also the vice chair of the Council on Membership and Professional Development and the chair of the CAP Ethics and Professional Project Team. So Dr. Valdes, my first question for you is what does it mean to you personally to be an FCAP and what should it mean to our members?

**Dr. Leilani Valdes:**

Well, thanks. That's an excellent question. Thanks for having me here today to talk about professionalism, ethics and the work of the Professional Ethics project team. So what does it mean to be an FCAP? Well, to me, first it means I'm board certified, and second, it means that I'm a member of the CAP. And what does that mean? Well, that means that I try my best to act in an ethical and professional manner. I also adhere to the College of American Pathologists Principles of Ethics and Professional Conduct, and that I'm committed to ongoing professional excellence and maintaining competence essentially by adding FCAP to my name after my MD credential. It means that I'm trying to act in the most professional and ethical manner and do the best I can by my patients. The CAP has tasked the professionalism and ethics project team to take a look at what it means to be an F-C-A-P, a fellow of the College of American Pathologists. And one of our first tasks was to sort of take a look at these, what we call principles of professional ethical behavior. The CAP has had these principles for a while, but our group took a look at them and added some changes and modernized the language. And these principles were just approved again by the board of the College of American Pathologist at their May board meeting, and they can be found on the CAP's website. So I encourage everyone to go take a look and use these principles in their day-to-day activities as a pathologist.

**Dr. Megan Kressin:**

Well, that's really exciting. That sounds like something brand new that we should all definitely check out. So is it going to be featured prominently on the website? Will we be able to find these ethics and Professional Conduct principles?

**Dr. Leilani Valdes:**

Yes, you should be able to do a search and find them. There is a link to them on the website and also there is some information that you can contact the membership office at the CAP if you have any questions about those principles or any other activities surrounding them. The CAP Foundation has a foundation grant that goes to encourage education and professionalism and ethics. And one of their speakers was featured at the Pathologist Leadership Summit just recently. And you can look for our group, the Professionalism and Ethics project team to provide more opportunities for pathologists to engage in this area to help them be the best they can be for their patients.

**Dr. Megan Kressin:**

So now that we have this new ethics and professional conduct principles that we can all find, what about this FCAP credential, how can our CAP members use the new credential and how can we get the word out about what it means?

**Dr. Leilani Valdes:**

That's an excellent question. Anyone listening here can do their part right now and make sure that on their email signature or their lab coat or anything where they have their MD or DO credential after the name, that they also include FCAP after their name to indicate that they are a board certified pathologist and a member of the CAP. This also lets patients and hospital administrators and other people know who around you that you are serious about maintaining professionalism in our specialty. You may have seen other specialists throughout the hospital use their fellow status on their marketing materials, and we at the CAP also believe that our members should take advantage of this way to indicate that they are committed to professionalism and ethics in pathology.

**Dr. Megan Kressin:**

Thank you so much, Dr. Valdes. Do you have any guidance for our members in how to meet our obligations to optimize patient care and how to improve the quality for the good of our CAP and society?

**Dr. Leilani Valdes:**

That is a fully loaded question, and I don't have all the answers for sure. But what I will add is that the CAP is here to support us in our effort to be the best we can be when it comes to professionalism and ethics in all areas of pathology. You can look for more resources to come out of the development and the work of the project team that's been tasked to do this work. And I can assure you that we are all works in progress as we move through our practices. And the CAP wants to make sure that we have the tools we need to address any issues that may arise in that sense in our practices when it comes to practicing as clinical pathologists, as anatomic pathologists, as the medical director in a laboratory, this is just one added area where the CAP is trying to help their members do our best for our patients.

**Dr. Megan Kressin:**

Well, thank you so much. That's very exciting. I look forward to seeing more on these principles and on the FCAP as we move forward as a society. Thank you.

**Dr. Leilani Valdes:**

Thank you so much. And if there are any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the membership team.