Table of Contents

The Author 3
List of Abbreviations 15
Preface 23
General Introduction and Overview 25
Reference 1 28

Chapter 1. General Background of the Country 31
§1. Geography and Climate 31
§2. Population 31
§3. The Political and Judicial System 32
§5. Health Status 35
§6. Social and Cultural Values Regarding Health 37
§7. The Constitutional Principles Underlying the Protection of Health
   I. Health as a Fundamental Right 40
   II. Autonomy and Human Dignity 44
   III. The Role of Healthcare 44

Chapter 2. Medical Law versus Health Law? 46
§1. Definition and Functions of Medical Law 46

5
Table of Contents

§2. Sources of Medical Law 47
   I. Sources 47
   II. European Union law 50
   III. National Sources 51

§3. The Role of Codes of Professional Ethics 53

Chapter 3. The Health Care System 58

§1. History and Evolution of the Italian Healthcare System 59
   I. From Unification to WWII 59
   II. From the Post WWII Era to 1978 60
      A. Department of Health 61
      B. The Mutual System 62
   III. From the Institution of the NHS to Date 63

§2. The Actual Organization of the Healthcare System and Its Planning 67
   I. The National Level 68
   II. The Regional Levels 69
   III. The Local Structure 69

§3. Eligibility, Covered Benefits and Actual Access 69
   I. Essential Levels of Assistance 72
   II. Rationing Instruments 72

§4. The Financing of Healthcare 73
   I. Historical Evolution and … 74
   II. … and the State of the Art 75
   III. Financing and Purchasing Services 78

§5. Integrating Public Health Care Coverage Insurances 79

§6. Territorial Services and Healthcare Protection 79
   I. Delivery of Services (Persons) 79
   II. Delivery of Services (Structures) 81
      A. Main Services and Organization 81
      B. Specific Services and Related Strategies 84
      C. Pharmacies 86

Part I. The Medical Profession(s) and the Healthcare System 89

Chapter 1. Access to the Medical Profession 89

§1. Medical Education 89
   I. Historical Note and Overview 89
   II. Constitutional Competence 91
Table of Contents

III. Undergraduate Medical Education 92
IV. Graduate Medical Education 93
V. Continuous Education in Medical Science 96

§2. LICENSING OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS AND MEDICAL SPECIALISTS: POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION 99

§3. MANPOWER PLANNING: FREEDOM OF ESTABLISHMENT 100

Reference 2 101

Chapter 2. Practice of Medicine 103

§1. LEGAL CONDITIONS FOR THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE 103
   I. Historical Note (and Interplay with Other Healthcare Professions) 103
   II. Healing Arts and Medicine 104
   III. Legal Monopoly of Physicians 105
      A. Legal Conditions for the Practice of Medicine 105
      1. Legal Diploma 105
      B. Visa 109
      1. Exemption from the Visa 110
      2. Withdrawal of the Visa 110
      C. Inscription on the List of the Order of Physicians 110

§2. THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH-RELATED PROFESSIONS 111
   I. General Introduction and Discipline 111
   II. The Practice of Medicine and the NHS 113
      A. Primary Care 113
      B. Ambulatory Care 114
      C. Secondary/Inpatient Care 114
   III. Specific Medical Activities 115
      A. Preventive Medicine 117
      B. Self-care 117
      C. Taking of Blood; Venepunctures 118
      D. Radiographies 118
      E. Blood Pressure Measuring and the Use of Other Simple Measuring Appliances 119
      F. Eye Examination and the Measuring of Eye Deviations 119
      G. Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy 119
      H. Group Therapy 120
      I. Acupuncture 120
      J. Written and Oral Advice and Recommendations 121
Table of Contents

Chapter 3. Illegal Practice of Medicine 122

§1. Legal Definition of the Offence 122

§2. Who is an Unauthorized Person (Criminal and Civil Consequences) 122

§3. The Conduct 123

§4. Sanctions 124

Chapter 4. Control over the Practice of Medicine 125

§1. The Order of Physicians 125
   I. Historical Note 125
   II. Registration on the List of the Order 126
      A. Obligation to Register on the List 126
      B. Exceptions 127
         1. Nationals of EC Member States 127
      C. The Obligation to Register and the Freedom of Association 128
      D. Competent Provincial Council 129
      E. Refusal or Delay of Registration 129
      F. Registration after Being Struck Off the Register 130
      G. Removal from the List 130
   III. Disciplinary Competence of the Order of Physicians 131
      A. Control over the Observance of the Rules of Professional Ethics 131
         1. General Description of the Disciplinary Competence 131
         2. Rules of Professional Ethics and Standards of Discretion, Probity and Dignity 132
         3. Limitations to the Disciplinary Power of the Provincial Councils 136
         4. Disciplinary Sanctions 136
         5. The Disciplinary Procedure and Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights 138
         6. Disciplinary Procedure before the Provincial Councils and the Appeals Councils 139
   IV. Organs of the Order of Physicians and Their Function 142
      A. Provincial Councils 142
         1. Composition 142
         2. Functions 142
      B. The National Council 143
         1. Composition 143
         2. Functions 144
Table of Contents

§2. Medical Ethics Committees 145
   I. General Remarks 145
   II. Ethics Committees in Hospitals 147
      A. Composition of the Committee 147
      B. The Competences of the Committee 148
   III. The National Committee on Bioethics 149
      A. Composition of the Council 149
      B. The Competences of the Council 150

Chapter 5. Medical-Related Accidents and Compensation 152

§1. The Medical Act and Its Legitimacy 152
   I. Consent to Contract versus Consent to Medical Treatment 153
   II. Legitimate Medical Intervention and the Limits of Consent: Damages for Lack of Consent 154

§2. Professional Liability 154
   I. Introduction and History 154
   II. Civil Liability
      A. Classification of Physician Liability 156
      B. Contents of the Physician’s Duty 157
      C. The Basis of Liability and Burden of Proof 159
         1. Fault 159
         2. Causation 160
         3. Damages
            Economic 163
            Non-economic 165
            Damages for Loss of Chance 166
      D. Aspects of Vicarious Liability 166
         1. Liability of Hospitals and ASL for the Acts of their Medical Staff 166
   III. Criminal Liability 168
      A. Medical Acts Resulting in Personal Injury or Death (Crimes) 170
      B. Medical Acts Resulting in Crimes against Individual Freedoms 170
         1. Private Violence and Procured Incapacity 171
         2. Kidnapping 171
         3. Professional Medical Negligence 171

§3. Special Indemnization Programmes 172
   I. Compensation for Victims of Vaccinations 172
      A. History 172
      B. Discipline 173
   II. Compensation for Victims of Blood Transfusions 174
      A. History 174
      B. Discipline 174
   III. Other 174
Table of Contents

Reference 3 176

Chapter 6. Quality Assurance and Risk Management 178

§1. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT: INTRODUCTION 178

§2. THE NOTION OF RISK MANAGEMENT 179

§3. REGIONAL AND NATIONAL INTERPLAY 180

§4. RISK MANAGEMENT, INSURANCE AND LIABILITY 180

§5. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND THE ROLE OF ORDER OF PHYSICIANS 181

§6. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND INTERNAL MANAGING CONTROLS 181

§7. HEALTHCARE-ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS (HCAI) 182

Part II. The Physician-Patient Relationship within and Outside the Healthcare System 183

Chapter 1. General Description 183

§1. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF PATIENTS AND PHYSICIANS 183
  I. The Rights of Patients 183
    A. The Duty of the Patient to Cooperate 184
    B. The Right to Quality Care 185
    C. The Right to Free Choice 185
    D. Rights Related to Information about the State of Health 187
       1. The Right to Information about One’s State of Health 187
       2. The Right Not to Know about One’s State of Health 189
       3. Relinquishing the Right to Information 191
       4. Not Informing Based on the Physician’s Initiative (the Therapeutic Exception) 191
    E. The Right to Give Consent 192
       1. The Right to Well-informed, Free and Prior Consent 197
       2. Modes of Giving Consent 197
       3. Content of the Information 198
       4. Presumed Consent in Cases of Emergency 199
    F. The Right to Refuse or Withdraw Consent 200
    G. Compulsory Treatments 203
  H. Rights Related to the Patient’s Medical Record 205
     1. The Right to a Medical Record 205
     2. The Right to Add to the Medical Record 208
     3. The Right to Access 208

10
Table of Contents

4. The Right to a Copy 209
5. Access by Next of Kin after the Death of the Patient 209
I. The Right to Protection of Privacy and Intimacy 209
J. The Right to Representation in the Event of Incompetence 211
K. The Right to Lodge a Complaint 212
II. Medical obligations in General 213
A. The Legal Duty to Help 213
1. Rules on the Practice of Medicine 213
2. Article 593 of the Criminal Code 213
4. Rules on Emergency Medical Care 214
B. Respect for the Privacy of the Patient 215
1. General Rule for Processing Personal Medical Data 215
2. Exceptions 216
3. Guarantees with Respect to the Processing of Personal Health-Related Data 218
4. Rights of the Data Subject 219
5. National and Regional Electronic Data Records 221
6. Privacy or Other Concerns Related to Electronic Health Record Systems EHRS (Fascicolo Sanitario Elettronico, FSE) 222
7. Special Cases 224
C. Duty of Medical Secrecy 226
1. General Principle 226
2. Exceptions 227
3. Notification of Criminal Acts 228
4. Consent of the Patient or Waiver 230
5. Deliverance of Medical Certificates to Third Parties 231
D. Medical Fees 232
1. Right to Fees or Remuneration for Services 232
2. Amount of the Fee 232
3. Fee-splitting 233
E. Unlawful Enrichment 233

Reference 4 234

Chapter 2. The Physician-Patient Relationship in Specific Terms 237

§1. THE MINOR PATIENT 237
I. General principles 237
A. Children’s Consent 237
B. The Role of Parents (and Legal Representatives) 239
C. Parental Denial of Consent 241
D. Information 241
Table of Contents

II. Cases of Exclusive Child Consent 241
III. Cases in Which Child Consent is ‘Forbidden’ 242
IV. Special Cases 242
   A. Mandatory Vaccinations 242
   B. Blood Transfusions 243
   C. Cancer Treatments 243
   D. Compulsory Sampling of Biological Materials (Treaty of Prüm) 243

§2. INTERDICTION, NON-(FULLY)-AUTONOMOUS PATIENTS AND
‘AMMINISTRAZIONE DI SOSTEGNO’ 244

§3. THE MENTAL PATIENT AND INVOLUNTARY PLACEMENT 247
   I. Legal Framework 247
   II. Involuntary Placement in a Mental Hospital 249
      A. Admission for Observation 250
         1. Simple Procedure (Non-emergency Cases) 250
         2. Emergency Procedure 250
         3. Practical Modalities of the Admission for Observation 250
      B. Prolonged Stay (TSO) 251
      C. Compulsory Treatment Outside the Hospital 252
      D. ASO and TSO for Minors 253
   III. The Rights of an Involuntary Placed Mental Patient 254
   IV. The Closing of Judicial Psychiatric Hospitals (Ospedali
       Psichiatrici Giudiziari, OPGs) 255

§4. THE DYING PATIENT 255
   I. Euthanasia 256
   II. Withholding or Withdrawing (Cessation) of Treatment 256
   III. Termination of Treatment (at the Request of the Patient) 256
   IV. Pain Relief and Palliative care 257
   V. Physician Assisted Suicide 261

Chapter 3. Specific Activities 262

§1. TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY (ABORTION) 262
   I. Short Overview of the Existing Legal Rules on Termination of
      Pregnancy 262
      A. Scope of the Law 262
      B. Conditions 262
      C. (So-called) Therapeutic Termination of Pregnancy 263
      D. Father’s ‘Participation’ 264
   II. Termination of Pregnancy by a Physician 264
   III. The (So-Called) Morning after Pill 265
   IV. Pharmacological Termination of Pregnancy (RU 486) 265
§2. STERILIZATION 265
   I. Surgical Contraception 266
      II. Sterilization of Mentally Handicapped 266

§3. MEDICALLY ASSISTED CONCEPTION 267
   I. Legal Framework 267
      II. Use of Donor Gametes 268
         III. Surrogacy 268

§4. HUMAN GENETICS 269
   I. Overview and Possibilities 269

§5. REMOVAL AND TRANSPLANTATION OF ORGANS AND TISSUES 270
   I. Scope of the Organ Transplantation Law 270
      II. Removal of Organs from Living Donors 270
         A. The Organ Transplantation (Donation) Law 270
            1. General Conditions 270
            2. Minor Donors 271
            3. Informed Consent 271
            4. Special Cases 271
            5. Duties of the Physician Removing Organs 272
         B. Therapeutic Substances of Human Origin 273
            1. Stem Cells and Cord Blood Banks 273
            2. Transfusions and Blood Donation 275
            3. Bone Marrow 276
      III. Removal of Organs after Death 276
         A. (Incomplete) Opting-out System 276
         B. Ways to Object 277
         C. Establishment of Death 277
         D. Special Cases (Prohibitions in Law 91/1999) 278
         E. Anonymity 278
         F. Autopsies 278

§6. RESEARCH 279
   I. Research with Human Beings 279
      A. Field of Application 279
      B. General Provisions Concerning the Protection of Subjects
         of Experiments 279
         1. Respect for Ethical and Scientific Quality Requirements 281
         2. Scientific Acceptability 282
         3. Proportionality (Balance between Benefits and Risks) 282
         4. Informed Consent of the Subject 282
         5. Primacy of the Human Being 283
         6. Favourable Opinion of an Ethics Committee 283
         7. Intervention of a Qualified Healthcare Practitioner 284
         8. Liability Rules (Civil, Administrative and Criminal) 285
Table of Contents

C. Specific Provisions for the Protection of Minors Participating in Experiments 286
   1. Informed Consent of the Parents or the Guardian 287
   2. Respecting the Explicit Will of the Minor 287
D. Specific Provisions for the Protection of Adults Incapable to Consent to an Experiment 287
E. Specific Provisions for the Protection of Persons Whose Consent Cannot Be Obtained Due to Emergency 288
F. Research with Embryos In Vitro 289
   1. Prohibited Procedures with Embryos In Vitro 289
   2. Prohibition to Create Embryos In Vitro Solely for Research Purposes 290

§7. PROFESSIONAL FREEDOM: PRESCRIBING DRUGS – TREATMENT WITH DRUG-SUBSTITUTES 290
   I. Legal Framework of Professional Freedom 290
   II. Control over Professional Freedom 292
   III. Prescription of Drugs 292
   IV. Treatment with Drug-Substitutes 292
   V. Off-Label Prescriptions 293

Selected Bibliography 295

Index 299