Hippocrates, often referred to as the “Father of Medicine,” was an ancient Greek physician who is said to have lived according to outstanding moral values and ethical medical practice.

Perhaps the greatest contribution made by Hippocrates to medicine is the Hippocratic Oath. For centuries, physicians have recited this oath (either the original version or modifications) at convocation ceremonies and upon entering medical practice. Although the oath has been subject to much debate over the centuries, both in terms of its content and its author, it remains one of the most quoted documents in the history of medicine.

The Hippocratic Oath was an oath taken by physicians to PROTECT ALL LIFE, to hold in highest regard one’s teachers, to recognize one’s limitations, and to renounce self-interest in the treatment of patients.

Certain values inherent in the Hippocratic Oath are echoed in modern views of professionalism; such attributes continue to define modern expectations of physicians and medical students alike.

Other views found in the Hippocratic Oath, such as those on abortion and surgical practice, do not seem to be consistent with some contemporary beliefs in modern, Western, SECULAR societies.

However, the SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH does not reside in its specific guidelines, but rather, in its symbolism of an ideal: THE SELFLESS DEDICATION TO THE PRESERVATION OF HUMAN LIFE. And make no mistake about it, a fetus is a HUMAN LIFE separate from that of the mother and thus, fully DESERVING OF PRESERVATION.

Furthermore, FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE AND RELIGION ARE FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN CANADA UNDER SECTION 2 OF THE CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS. A POLICY THAT RESTRICTS THE FREEDOM OF PHYSICIANS TO PRACTICE THEIR PROFESSION IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH THEIR CONSCIENCE OR MORAL AND ETHICAL BELIEFS INFRINGES UPON THESE CHARTER RIGHTS.

Therefore, PHYSICIANS MUST BE ALLOWED TO REFUSE TO PROVIDE A PATIENT WITH A TREATMENT OR PROCEDURE IF IT CONFLICTS WITH THE PHYSICIAN’S RELIGIOUS OR MORAL BELIEFS.