



The College of Naturopaths of Ontario



Standard of Practice:

Advertising

Introduction

The intent of this standard is to advise Members on the appropriate and acceptable methods of advertising that may be used as a part of their practice.

The College supports Members' use of appropriate advertising to communicate the type and availability of services to the public or other health care professionals so that potential and existing patients and referral sources can make choices based on their respective needs.

Definitions

Advertisement: Any message communicating information about a Member's practice and/or the professional services he/she offers, the content of which he/she controls or influences, directly or indirectly, which is expressed in any language with the intent to influence choice, opinion or behavior and communicated in any public medium to anyone.

Advertising is not the same as providing information to prospective referral sources or sending out health care notices and reminders.

Public Medium: Any form of communication that is, generally speaking, equally available to anyone who chooses to use it and that is directed to the public, or a specific subsection of the public rather than to an individual person or persons. For example radio, television, websites, flyers, and the yellow pages are all forms of public media. Emails targeted to individuals are not an acceptable advertising medium.

1. Advertising

The Member may use any public medium to advertise professional services offered within the scope of practice of Naturopathic Medicine to members of the public, or other health care professionals, to assist them in making informed choices about the health care services provided by Naturopathic Doctors.

The Member's advertisements are accurate, verifiable, comprehensible, professionally appropriate and in compliance with the standards of practice of the profession. The Member is always responsible for advertisements about his or her practice regardless of whether or not the advertisement is made by the individual Member. The Member takes reasonable steps to ensure that advertisements placed by others about his/her services meet these standards.

Performance Indicators

The Member ensures the information in advertisements is:

- accurate;
- true;
- verifiable by the Member;
- not misleading by either omitting relevant information or including non-relevant information;
- professional;
- comprehensible to its intended audience;
- in accordance with the generally accepted standards of good taste.

References to professional qualifications used in advertisements are consistent with the College's Standard of Practice for Restricted Titles.

Any reference to the cure of symptoms or diseases, or appealing to the public's fears does not meet the standard.

Professional services offered by a Member advertising in her/her capacity as a Naturopathic Doctor are within the scope of practice of Naturopathic Medicine.

Advertisements do not include anything that could be interpreted as intending to promote a demand for unnecessary services.

Reference to fees or prices used in advertisements meet the expectations for truth and accuracy described in this standard. The Member's advertisements may:

- display or distribute a fee schedule and/or explanation of the way fees are calculated;
- provide information about fees or charges in response to a request for this information;
- provide information on the funding models or insurance plans accepted;
- indicate the forms of payment accepted.

The Member ensures that advertisements do not include:

- any information that could be interpreted to be an endorsement by a Naturopathic Doctor including an expressed or implied endorsement or recommendation for the exclusive use of a drug, product or brand of equipment used in her/her practice;
- a guarantee of the success of the service provided;
- a comparative or superlative statement about service quality, products or people;
- a direct, indirect or implied testimonial by any patient, former patient or other person in respect of the Member's practice
- any references to third-party websites or publications that carry testimonials or endorsements of the Member.

The Member avoids directly or indirectly soliciting patients in person, by telephone, e-mail, or any other means of communication that is not considered to be a public medium. This does not prevent the Member from advertising to the general public or calling/emailing a patient to remind him or her of an upcoming appointment/service. Rather, the Member should not target advertising to individuals or use communication techniques that can pressure potentially vulnerable persons.

Related Standards & Guidelines

Conflict of Interest

Dual Registration

Fees and Billing
Restricted Titles
College of Naturopaths of Ontario's Guideline on Advertising

Legislative Framework

[Professional Misconduct Regulation](#)

Approval

Original Approval Date: October 15, 2012

Latest Amendment Date: December 6, 2017

Disclaimer

In the event of any inconsistency between this standard and any legislation that governs the practice of Naturopathic Doctors, the legislation shall govern.