



The College of Naturopaths of Ontario



Standard of Practice:

Conflict of Interest

Introduction

The intent of this standard is to help Members understand the concept of conflict of interest and how to recognize it in their practice.

Definitions

Conflict of Interest: When a Member engages in a relationship or arrangement as a result of which the Member's personal interests could improperly influence his/her professional judgment or conflict with his/her duty to act in the best interest of patients.

Related Person: A person related to the Member by blood, marriage or adoption, or by living with the Member in a conjugal relationship outside of marriage. A related person may also include an extended family member, close friends, corporations or other businesses, and business partners.

Financial Benefit: where a Member's primary interest is influenced and/or directed by financial gain. For the purpose of this Standard of Practice financial benefit does not include charging fees for services as per a fee schedule but rather occurs when the possibility of financial benefits dictate the course of treatment and action. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Payment from a pharmaceutical company for prescribing their drug;
- Receiving a bonus for recruiting patients into a research study;
- Recommending all patients undergo a test that the Member has commercial ownership;
- Referring patients to a spouse's business.

1. Conflict of Interest

The Member conducts his/her practice in a professional manner with the focus of the practice on the health care of patients. Acting while in a conflict of interest is professional misconduct and is not permitted.

Performance Indicators

The Member recognizes, discloses and manages any real or perceived conflict of interest appropriately.

Where it is not possible to avoid a conflict of interest, the Member:

- discloses and discusses the situation with the patient before providing any services;
- makes the patient aware of practical alternatives;
- documents the discussion in the patient record.

The Member refrains from participating in any activity or arrangement where his/her participation provides the potential for his/her professional judgment to be compromised.

Members do not recommend products or services to patients that are not clinically indicated.

Members do not recommend the purchase of products or services in which the member or a related person has a financial benefit.

Conflict of interest is not avoided by structuring the arrangement to move any benefit arising to a related person.

Related Standards and Guidelines

Advertising

Dispensing

Prescribing

Recommending Non-Scheduled Substances

Record Keeping

Selling

Conflict of Interest Guideline

Legislative Framework

[Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991](#)

[Professional Misconduct Regulation](#)

Approval

Original Approval Date: October 15, 2012

Latest Amendment Date: March 6, 2019

Disclaimer

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