



The College of
Physicians and Surgeons
of Newfoundland and Labrador

Practice Guideline: Advertising and Public Communications

Practice Guidelines are recommendations developed by the College with which members should be familiar and follow whenever and wherever possible and appropriate.

ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Preamble

Advertising and public communications reflect the notice and/or exchange of information that is communicated orally to the public, in print, or through any electronic means. Physicians must ensure that professional advertising and public communications are accurate. This is a professional responsibility defined within the Canadian Medical Associations' Code of Ethics, which the College has adopted.

Practice Guideline

Definitions

“Advertisement” means any communication made orally, in print, or through any electronic means by/on behalf of a physician, to any person or the general public, to promote his/her facility, clinic, group, corporation, or other practice or business entity with which the physician is associated or of any services/products provided therein.

Examples of advertisements:

- Signs
- Newspaper advertisements
- Websites for clinic practices
- Social media accounts for clinical practices
- Statements made in the media by a physician for the purposes of promotion
- Radio, television and electronic advertisements

Guidelines

Advertising by physicians or on their behalf must be clear, concise, and accurate and should adhere to the following guidelines:

An advertisement ***should not***:

- (a) include non-factual statements;
- (b) be false, inaccurate, misleading, or deceptive;
- (c) compare or condemn, either directly or indirectly, another medical practitioner's services, facility, clinic, group, fees, or ability;
- (d) assert that a physician can offer more effective services than those available elsewhere;
- (e) offer a result which is an unjustified or unreasonable expectation about what the medical practitioner can achieve;
- (f) be offensive or incompatible with the best interests of the public or tend to harm the reputation of the medical profession;
- (g) contravene the Canadian Medical Association Code of Ethics.

An advertisement ***should***:

- (a) be factual, truthful, and verifiable;
- (b) provide the public with relevant information which will enable patients to make an informed choice of a physician or service;
- (c) accurately reflect the suitable knowledge, skills, and judgement a physician needs to practise in the advertised areas;
- (d) be respectful of the privacy and confidentiality of all patients.

Examples of information which a physician may choose to include in an advertisement:

- Physician's name, degree(s), & credentials;
- Certified speciality, area of practice or special interest;
- Languages spoken;
- Office address, telephone number & hours/days of operation;
- Office website
- Location information including availability of parking;
- Accessibility
- House call and emergency services.

Acknowledgement/s

College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario

Document History

Approved by Council	December 10, 2016
Reviewed & Updated	
Expected Review Date	December 10, 2021
Publication Date	December 20, 2016