



PRACTICE STANDARD

Advertising and Communication with the Public

Effective: December 1, 2009

Last revised: July 24, 2023

Version: 7.2

Related topic(s): [Conflict of Interest](#); [Promotion and Sale of Medical Supplies and Devices](#); [Sale and Dispensing of Drugs](#); [Social Media](#)

A practice standard reflects the minimum standard of professional behaviour and ethical conduct on a specific topic or issue expected by the College of its registrants (all physicians and surgeons who practise medicine in British Columbia). Standards also reflect relevant legal requirements and are enforceable under the _____, RSBC 1996, c.183 () and College [Bylaws](#) under the _____.

Preamble

This document is a standard of the Board of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia.

In this standard, “advertising” or an “advertisement” means any communication made orally, in print, through electronic media or via the internet by or on behalf of a registrant to the public where its substantial purpose is to promote the registrant, the registrant's services, or the clinic or group where the registrant practises or with which the registrant is associated.

Registrants must be cautious when establishing business alliances that might limit their control on the content or placement of the advertisement and the promotion of their services. Registrants are solely responsible for the content of any such advertising prepared by a marketing agency or third party and must ensure by contract that they are fully informed of all such communication with the public. In the event of a complaint, the Inquiry Committee may not accept lack of awareness as a defence if that has not been secured in a written agreement.

The College does not pre-approve or endorse any advertisements or public communications.

College's position

Any inducement, enticement or incentive to a patient may interfere with the patient's autonomy and with the registrant's fiduciary responsibility to the patient. Promotion of medical services is generally considered incompatible with a fiduciary relationship. A significant power and knowledge imbalance between a registrant and a prospective patient is assumed. Communication with the public must be limited to truthful information that assists the patient in making an informed decision.

Should a registrant choose to advertise, the advertisement must

conform to the Canadian Medical Association's _____,

conform to the _____ issued by Health Canada,

conform to the _____,

be compatible with the best interest of the patient and uphold the reputation of the medical profession,

include the name of at least one registrant who is responsible for the content (including when it is distributed on behalf of a registrant, partnership, group or

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