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## Standards of Practice: Advertising and Marketing

### Standards of Practice

Advertising and marketing by naturopathic doctors must be ethical, professionally appropriate, accurate and verifiable.

### Introduction

The College supports naturopathic doctors' 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.

This standard outlines the appropriate and acceptable methods of advertising that naturopathic doctors may use as a part of their practice which includes electronic, online, print or verbal communications.

### Definitions

**Collaboration:** two or more regulated health professionals working together in a shared health care setting to administer shared treatment.

**Competence:** the combined knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment required to provide professional services, defined in the *Health Professions Act*.

**Product:** any device and substance that does not qualify as a drug.

**Professional services:** any services provided by a naturopathic doctor while using their title.

**Scope of practice:** refers to the knowledge and skills of naturopathic doctors and the comprehensive application of that knowledge and skills to assist patients. Scope of practice includes all the activities that naturopathic doctors are authorized, educated and competent to perform.

**Substance:** anything that is publicly available and which may include botanical tinctures, botanical powders or loose herbs, fluid/solid extracts, base creams, salves and ointments, homeopathic remedies, vitamins, minerals and amino acids.

**Standard of Practice:** an authoritative statement that describes a minimum required behaviour of every naturopathic doctor and is used to evaluate individual conduct. Naturopathic doctors should always strive to practice above the minimum standards. Performance below the minimum standard may result in disciplinary action.

### Naturopathic doctors demonstrate this standard of practice by:

1. ensuring all advertising and marketing in respect of their professional services and products are:
  - a) factual;
  - b) accurate;
  - c) professional;
  - d) verifiable;
  - e) understandable to the intended audience; and
  - f) in accordance with generally accepted standards of good taste.
2. ensuring that advertisements do **not**:
  - a) deceive or mislead by either omitting relevant information or including non-relevant information;
  - b) take advantage of the weakened state, either physical, mental or emotional, of its intended audience;
  - c) promote a demand for an unnecessary service;
  - d) guarantee success of a service or an unjustified expectation about the results which the naturopathic doctor can achieve;
  - e) state or imply that the naturopathic doctor can obtain results not achievable by other naturopathic doctors;
  - f) use comparative statements about service quality, health professionals or products;
  - g) use statements that depreciate another naturopathic doctor, other health professional or profession, clinic, or facility; and
  - h) harm the integrity of the profession.
3. Disclosing all financial affiliations with any advertised or endorsed products;
4. Ensuring that advertisements that include the naturopathic doctor's statement of fees for a specific service:
  - a) sufficiently describe the fees and services to meet the expectations of truth, accuracy and being understandable to the intended audience; and
  - b) refrain from comparing the fees charged by the naturopathic doctor with those charged by another naturopathic doctor.
5. Only advertising services within the capacity of the naturopathic doctor that:
  - a) are within the naturopathic scope of practice; and
  - b) the naturopathic doctor is currently authorized to perform.
6. Accurately representing their education and experience by:
  - a) using appropriate titles as outlined in Schedule 14 of the *Health Professions Act*; and
  - b) avoiding the use of lengthy suffixes listing membership, affiliations etc. that could be misleading and imply extra experience.
7. Disclosing when a naturopathic doctor collaborates with another regulated health care professional in the delivery of services and treatment plans.
8. Submitting an inquiry to the CNDA if the naturopathic doctor is uncertain as to whether or not an advertisement fits into the parameters of this standard.

## Expected Outcomes

The public and other health care professionals are satisfied that:

- information advertised by naturopathic doctors with regards to their services is accurate; and
- information advertised by naturopathic doctors assists in making an informed choice based on their respective needs.

## Related Documents

*Health Professions Act*

*Government Organization Act*

*Naturopaths Profession Regulation*

CNDA Code of Ethics

CNDA Standard of Practice: General

CNDA Standard of Practice: Collaboration in Patient Care

CNDA Guideline: Collaboration in Patient Care in a Shared Healthcare Setting

