

# Standards of Practice

# Advertising and Marketing

## Standard

The physiotherapist engages in **advertising, marketing, and promotional activities** that are truthful, accurate, and verifiable and does not engage in or allow advertising, marketing, and promotional activities that are deceptive or misleading.

## Expected outcome

**Clients** can expect that the advertising, marketing and promotion of physiotherapy services and products is not deceptive or misleading and enables the client to make informed choices.

## Performance expectations

The physiotherapist:

- Advertises only the physiotherapy services that they are competent to provide.
- Does not state or imply a practice focus, or area of interest in their advertising, marketing, or promotional activities unless:
  - The area of interest is a demonstrated significant focus of their practice.
  - The physiotherapist can demonstrate ongoing professional development and continuing education in the area of interest.
- Does not refer to themselves as a specialist or employ other language that implies specialization in an area of practice or physiotherapy service provision unless authorized by the Registrar to use the designation “Clinical Specialist.”
- Confirms that all marketing of physiotherapy services and products is truthful, accurate, and verifiable.
- Reviews and approves all advertisements, marketing and promotional activities prepared by a third party to ensure compliance with the Standards of Practice.
- Does not use advertisements, marketing, or promotional activities that:
  - Promote or encourage unnecessary use of physiotherapy services.
  - Make unsubstantiated claims, foster unrealistic expectations, or provide guarantees of successful outcomes.
  - Include claims of uniqueness or special advantage of products, physiotherapy services, or providers, unless supported by **credible** evidence that can be readily verified.
  - Make comparative or **superlative** statements about service quality, health providers, and products and/or endorses products for financial gain.

- Discredit, disparage or undermine the skills of other providers or the physiotherapy services of other clinics or facilities.
- Does not advertise, market, or promote physiotherapy services using incentives or other inducements, including but not limited to:
  - Offering discounts that vary from the practice setting’s fee schedule, including discount coupons.
  - Gift certificates.
  - Time-limited pricing for physiotherapy services or products.
  - Prizes or gifts of a physiotherapy service or product.
- Does not advertise free physiotherapy services. This includes offers of free consultations, screening appointments, assessments, or free trials of physiotherapy treatments.

## Free physiotherapy services may be provided for the purposes of:

- Providing general education or health promotion.
- Informing the public about physiotherapy services offered.
- Providing pro bono services to clients experiencing financial hardship.

No paid physiotherapy services to the same client can occur on the same day as the free services. When providing free services, physiotherapists must comply with all of the Standards of Practice.

**Advertising:** the action of calling something to the attention of the public especially by paid announcements.

**Clients:** recipients of physiotherapy services, and may be individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, or populations. An individual client may also be referred to as a patient. In some circumstances, clients/patients may be represented by their substitute decision-makers.

**Credible:** means any evidence that reasonably would be viewed as reliable, accurate, and having basis in fact.

**Marketing:** the process or technique of promoting, selling, and distributing a product or service.

**Physiotherapy services:** “services provided by or under the direction of a physiotherapist. This includes client assessment and treatment, and related communication with and reporting to various parties for the purposes of delivering client care.”

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**Promotional Activities:** include any effort made by an individual or business to communicate with potential customers. Promotional activities have two main purposes, to inform customers about your products, prices and services and to persuade customers to buy the products and services you sell. Includes personal selling, direct marketing, advertising, sales promotion, publicity, and public relations.

**Superlative:** "an expression of abundant praise." "Excessive or exaggerated; of the highest order, quality, or degree; surpassing or superior to all others." In physiotherapy practice, statements such as "expert", "best", or "number 1" are examples of superlative statements.

## Related Standards

- Dual Practice
- Evidence-Informed Practice
- Titles, Credentials, and Specialty Designations