

### 4.14 Advertising

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**Purpose:**

Advertising is the use of space or time in a public medium, or the use of commercial publication such as a brochure or social media, to communicate with the general public or a segment thereof, for the purpose of promoting professional services.

**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.

**Policy:**

Marketing, advertising or promotional activities by physiotherapists, physiotherapy facilities or entities providing physiotherapy services should serve a legitimate purpose in providing the public with relevant information and must be truthful, accurate and verifiable. A physiotherapist should not engage in or allow advertising, marketing or promotional activities that are deceptive or misleading.

**Guidelines:**

A physiotherapist demonstrates the practice standard by:

- Ensuring that advertising and promotional activities are truthful, accurate and verifiable:
- Information must be factual and accurate and not promote a demand for unnecessary services or provide guarantees of success/results. It cannot mislead the public in any way.
- Advertises only the physiotherapy services that they are competent to perform. Ensuring content is within the scope of physiotherapy practice and is professionally appropriate. It is important to ensure that any advertising does not encourage the public to partake in unnecessary services.
- Reviews and approves all advertisements, marketing and promotional activities prepared by a third party to ensure compliance with the Standards of Practice. A physiotherapist is responsible for ensuring advertising on their behalf complies with this practice statement.
- Advertising should not call into question the competence of any other physiotherapist.
- 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 College to use the designation “Clinical Specialist.” A physiotherapist authorized to use this designation must follow the proper format for this designation as detailed in the related Practice Direction (4.23 Use of Title and Credentials) to have this terminology used in their advertising.

- Does not advertise free physiotherapy services.  
This includes offers of free consultations, screening appointments, assessments, or free trials of physiotherapy treatments.
- Does not offer incentives or other inducements including but not limited to:
  - Prizes or gifts of a physiotherapy service or product. High value products (TV, tablet) that may be raffled off or given to a patient and/or future patients are considered unethical. Nominal items (pens, notepad) may be used to advertise services provided the other guidelines of this practice standard are met. Collecting personal information from the public by way of a draw/raffle to use for future advertising is not permitted.
  - Offer discounts that vary from the practice setting's fee schedule, including discount coupons.
  - Gift Certificates
  - Time-limited pricing for physiotherapy services or products
- Does not advertising package deals.  
This practice does not align with client-centered care and the physiotherapist's responsibility to address the client's treatment goals. This type of fee bundling is not supported by the College of Physiotherapists of Manitoba. Please refer to 5.2 Fee Schedules and Billing Practices.
- Does not solicit testimonials or web reviews.  
Consider the power differential between you and your client. If a client is asked by a health professional to provide a testimonial or post a review, they may feel some sense of obligation or pressure to do so. If they choose not to, they might think their care will be negatively impacted. Requesting a testimonial or review might influence the professional boundaries between you and your client.

**Note:** Free physiotherapy services may be offered for the purpose of:

- Providing general education or health promotion
- Informing the public about physiotherapy services offered
- volunteering at a professionally appropriate event (i.e. a community sporting event/run).

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

For reference, professional announcements, business listings, news media, signage, promotional materials and any electronic media (included but not limited to websites, newsletters, blogs, social media sites/postings) are considered advertising or promotional material and therefore must conform to the above guidelines.

**For Consideration:**

- A registrant must not state publicly that he or she speaks on behalf of the CPM unless he or she has been expressly authorized by the College of Physiotherapists of Manitoba to state the official position of CPM.
- The use of the CPM logo is prohibited.