

Background

One of the responsibilities of the College under the *Registered Dietitians Act (2005)* is to adopt and enforce a code of ethics governing the conduct of members. This practice direction outlines the requirements for Registered Dietitians with respect to advertising, sales, testimonials, and incentives.

Definitions

Advertising - a written, audio, or visual promotion in any medium related to a member's practice. It does not include advice; an opinion or recommendation given while counseling clients¹

Practice Direction

Advertising

- Dietitians shall not engage in, or allow the use of, by any means whatsoever, advertising that is false, incomplete, or liable to mislead the public²
- Advertising must not create false or unjustified expectations as to the results
- Advertising must be consistent with the members professional obligations

Sales

- Dietitians shall not sell or promote any product, or act as an agent for the sale or promotion of any product, in such a manner as to mislead or create a false impression. For example, dietitians must not guarantee the success of any product or product line or imply unjustified expectations about the results the client may achieve by using the product or product line³
- Dietitians must not sell or promote dietetic products or services that are not supported by evidence-based research
- Dietitians must not use professional designation to sell products or services unrelated to dietetics
- Dietitians must disclose to clients when products are being sold for profit, provided with options for purchasing elsewhere and reassured that care will not be affected by purchasing decisions.
- Dietitians must disclose any industry relationships that exist between the dietitian and the product or product line being recommended³
- Dietitians must demonstrate a thorough understanding of the of the product or product line including, indications, contraindications, interactions, side effects or adverse effects³

¹ College of Dietitians of Ontario. *Proposed Regulation: Advertising: Section 32 (1)* Toronto

² College of Dietitians of Manitoba. *Code of Ethics for Registered Dietitians in Manitoba*. January 2005.

³ Nova Scotia Dietitians Association. *Position Statement on the Recommendation, Endorsement and Sale of Products*. March 2016.

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Testimonials

Testimonials are permitted in the province of Manitoba, provided they meet the guidelines for advertising as described above

Incentives

Dietitians working in Manitoba can offer loyalty points or rewards (such as Air Miles) for nutrition counseling. However, “bonus” points to entice or restrict patients to purchase nutrition counseling on a particular day (or days) to qualify for greater gratuity are not permitted.