

# CDSS ADVERTISING STANDARD



Status:	Approved
Approved by Council:	October 2024
Amended:	November 2024
To be Reviewed:	October 2029

## PREAMBLE

1. The basic intent of this CDSS Advertising Standard is to protect the public interest and to ensure that advertisements by dentists do not deprecate the professionalism, integrity, and ethics of the dental profession.
2. The CDSS is not limiting advertising but it wishes to control the content of advertisements to protect the public from advertising that:
  - i. is inaccurate; misleading; untruthful; fraudulent; not objectively verifiable; subjective; personal opinion; an interpretation; a testimonial;
  - ii. includes non-objectively verifiable statements of superiority, uniqueness, and comparison; statements that are unprofessional, undignified, deprecating, or could be perceived to take advantage of physical, emotional or financial duress or urgency; suggestion of better results or unjustified expectations; and references to materials, techniques, equipment.
3. The frequency, size, location, and medium of advertising are not controlled but must otherwise comply with this CDSS Advertising Standard and be in good taste, professional, and observe the dignity and ethics of the profession.

## PERSONS WHO MAY ADVERTISE

4. The only persons who are permitted to advertise are General Dentist Registrants and Specialist Registrants pursuant to Section 2(3)(a)(b) of the CDSS Regulatory Bylaws.
5. All CDSS licensed members, regardless of their position within a practice or corporation, are responsible for any communication or advertising that has a bearing on their practice.

## NON-SPECIALIST

6. A dentist without a specialty license, a “general dentist”, may communicate or advertise one or more of the CDSS recognized specialties (as per 7. below) provided that the general dentist further clearly states in such advertisement that the specialty services are provided by a dentist who is not a specialist (“not as a specialist”).

## SPECIALIST

7. Any member that wishes to advertise as a specialist in a CDSS recognized specialty must be licensed as a specialist in the specialty being advertised.
  - i. Endodontics
  - ii. Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon
  - iii. Oral Medicine and Pathology
  - iv. Oral Radiology
  - v. Orthodontics

- vi. Pediatrics
- vii. Periodontics
- viii. Prosthodontics
- ix. Public Health Dentistry

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## NAMES OF STAFF

- 8. Names of staff, retired dentists (after 1 year), former associates, and former partners must not be used in advertising.

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## PERMITTED DESIGNATIONS

- 9. Only the degrees D.D.S., D.M.D. and any earned academic dental degrees, earned academic dental diplomas, or earned academic dental certificates are allowed where:
  - i. an earned academic dental degree, earned academic dental diploma or earned academic dental certificate is one which is awarded by an accredited educational institution recognized by the CDSS;
  - ii. and honorary degrees or fellowships shall be limited to scientific papers, curriculum vitae, and communications which are not used for the direct solicitation of patients.

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## DENTAL PRACTICE NAMES

- 10. Practice names are considered to be advertising and must be pre-approved by the Advertising Review Committee and must comply with this CDSS Advertising Standard.
- 11. Acceptable dental practice names are the following: Practice; Office; Group; Clinic; Studio; or Centre.

- 12. Acceptable dental practice names do not include the implied specialties 'Family' or 'Emergency' (as per 7. above).
- 13. Professional corporation names, if to be used for advertising, must:
  - i. be pre-approved by the Advertising Review Committee;
  - ii. comply with the Professional Corporations Act;
  - iii. be compliant with this CDSS Advertising Standard.

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## ADVERTISING BY A MEMBER

External Advertising is defined as advertising, promotion, communication, and other marketing activities intended to attract patients or promote treatments. All External Advertising must comply with the entirety of this CDSS Advertising Standard.

- 14. Advertising, promotion, and other marketing activities must be accurate and not be capable of misleading the public; and must:
  - i. Not misrepresent the facts;
  - ii. Not be untruthful, not false;
  - iii. Not be misleading, deceptive, ambiguous, fraudulent;
  - iv. Be objectively verifiable;
  - v. Be relevant to the public's ability to make an informed choice;
  - vi. Not be contrary to the best interests of the public;
  - vii. Not include personal feelings, beliefs, interpretations, opinions, bias, and testimonials.
- 15. Advertising, promotion, and other marketing activities must be professional and observe the dignity and ethics of the profession and therefore should not include:
  - i. Superlative or non-objectively verifiable;

statements of superiority, uniqueness, and comparison to other providers;

- ii. Undignified statements;
- iii. Deprecating statements about other members;
- iv. Statements in bad taste that could harm the profession;
- v. Suggestions of better results or unjustified expectations
- vi. Bias, guise, coercion, or harassment to take advantage of physical, emotional, financial duress or urgency;
- vii. Incentive programs, coupons, giveaways, and discounts;
- viii. Reference materials, techniques, equipment, and services;
- ix. Specialities, implied or otherwise, that are not recognized by the College

16. Advertising, promotion, and other marketing activities must be objectively verifiable. Objectively verifiable means “capable of being proven by facts independent of personal feelings, beliefs, interpretations, or opinions.” Subjective statements or representations, expressed or implied, raise ethical concerns.

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## ADVERTISING WITHIN A PRACTICE

Internal Advertising is defined as advertising, promotion, communication, and other marketing activities solely directed to and visible to individuals within a practice facility and through various media to patients of record, as well as to those who voluntarily join a mailing list, follow a social media profile, or other overt actions that indicate interest by the individual in the practice.

17. Internal Advertising must meet the following requirements:
- i. must be accurate and objectively verifiable;
  - ii. not be capable of misleading the public;

- iii. must be professional and observe the dignity and ethics of the profession;
- iv. and must satisfy the CDSS Informed Consent Standard.

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## MODES OF ADVERTISING, PROMOTION, AND OTHER MARKETING ACTIVITIES

18. Modes of External Advertising includes:

- i. business cards, stationery, logos;
- ii. telephone book, yellow pages;
- iii. flyers, news articles, advertorials, infomercials;
- iv. new business profiles, new clinic’s and new dentist’s announcements;
- v. announcements of awards;
- vi. sponsorships, donations;
- vii. holiday greetings;
- viii. radio, television, video;
- ix. signage, billboards;
- x. tradeshow booths;
- xi. social media promoted posts and sponsored ads;
- xii. on-line display ads, online search engine sponsored ads;
- xiii. on-line directories;
- xiv. text messaging;
- xv. website domain names and addresses;
- xvi. social medial postings that make use of tags, hashtags, or location services;
- xvii. social media postings that request tags or shares;
- xviii. social media postings that incentivize reviews, referrals and/or new patients;

- xix. social media postings by CDSS members that make reference to a CDSS-authorized facility or clinic;
  - xx. social media postings made by businesses, media outlets, and influencers;
  - xxi. all social media postings made on social media platforms where the content is pushed to non- followers of that profile (eg. TikTok)
- 23. Handouts of printed material should contain only generic dental information with no specific products or materials named.
  - 24. Giveaways and retail products should be limited to preventive oral health 'over the counter' products with no conditions attached.
  - 25. The CDSS considers it to be unprofessional and inappropriate to perform clinical procedures at a tradeshow booth or at a temporary kiosk.

The above list is not exhaustive. All advertising, promotion, communication, and other marketing activity that does not meet the explicit definition of Internal Advertising (section 17, above) may be considered External Advertising for the purposes of this document.

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## WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

- 19. The information and content within a Practice website and all social media profiles associated with that Practice are considered forms of Internal Advertising, provided they do not meet any of the criteria listed in section 18. As such, they must satisfy section 17 of this CDSS Advertising Standard.

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## TRADESHOW BOOTH ADVERTISING

- 20. A tradeshow booth is considered advertising, marketing, and promotional activity (as per 18. above) and therefore must be compliant with this CDSS Advertising Standard.
- 21. Signage, handouts, giveaways, etc. available at the tradeshow booth must be compliant with this CDSS Advertising Standard.
- 22. Large active projection screens and monitors are considered 'billboards' (as per 16. above) and must be compliant with this CDSS Advertising Standard.