



# Standard

## Advertising & Social Media

### **Purpose:**

Advertising and marketing by naturopathic doctors must be ethical, professionally appropriate, accurate and verifiable. The intent of this standard is to advise Members on the appropriate and acceptable methods of advertising that may be used as part of their practice. Information provided and posted by a member in their personal and professional advertising and social media can be used in the course of investigating a complaint against a member.

### **Introduction:**

The Association supports Members' 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.

**Public Medium:** Any form of communication that is, generally speaking, equally available to anyone who chooses to use it and that is directed to the public, or a specific subsection of the public rather than to an individual person or persons. For example social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram,) blogs, radio, television, websites, flyers, and the Yellow Pages are all forms of public media. Emails targeted to individuals are not an acceptable advertising medium.

### **Third Parties:**

The Member is always responsible for advertisements about his or her practice regardless of whether or not the advertisement is made by the individual Member. The Member takes reasonable steps to ensure that advertisements placed by others about his/her services meet these standards.

### **Formats:**

This standard outlines the appropriate and acceptable methods of advertising that naturopathic doctors may use as a part of their practice and includes but is not limited to the following:

- Electronic: email, email signatures, websites, blogs etc.
- Social Media: Facebook, public & private member groups, Instagram, Twitter etc.
- Product labeling
- Verbal communications including presentations/public talks
- All printed matter: brochures, receipts, business cards, presentations, signage (including outdoor) etc.

## Standard of Care:

The Member ensures the information in advertisements is:

- accurate/true
- verifiable by the Member
- not misleading by either omitting relevant information or including non-relevant information;
- professional;
- comprehensible to its intended audience;
- in accordance with the Association's *Vaccine Guidelines*

Any reference to the cure of symptoms or diseases, or appealing to the public's fears does not meet the standard

Professional services offered by a Member advertising in his/her capacity as a Naturopathic Doctor are within the scope of practice of Naturopathic Medicine in Manitoba.

Advertisements do not make comparisons to the quality, methodologies or reviews of other practitioners or compare the fees charged by the naturopathic doctor with those charged by another naturopathic doctor

## Prohibited Titles:

References to professional qualifications used in advertisements accurately represent education and experience by: a) using appropriate titles as outlined in the *Naturopathic Act* and b) avoiding the use of lengthy suffixes listing membership, affiliations etc. that could be misleading and imply extra experience.

- Physician is a protected title in Manitoba for use by Medical Doctors only
- Dr. used alone without "ND," "Naturopath," "Naturopathic Doctor" immediately following Family Medicine or Family Medical Clinic without the use of *Naturopathic* or *Natural*
- Any title that implies that the Member or Clinic is functioning as a Medical Doctor, Medical Lab, Primary Care Physician, Pharmacy or Pharmacist
- Specializing: Naturopathic regulation does not recognize the ability to "specialize" but NDs may focus their practice or have areas of interest, such as women's health or natural family health care

Don't use	Use instead
Medicine	Naturopathic medicine
Doctor	Naturopathic doctor
Medical testing	Laboratory testing
Specializing	Focusing
Family medicine	Family health care
Physician	Naturopathic doctor
Primary care physicians	Primary care practitioners
Becoming a doctor	Becoming a naturopathic doctor or ND

## **Fees/Pricing:**

Reference to fees or prices used in advertisements meet the expectations for truth and accuracy described in this standard.

The Member's advertisements may:

- Display or distribute a fee schedule and/or explanation of the way fees are calculated;
- Provide information about fees or charges in response to a request for this information;
- Provide information on the funding models or insurance plans accepted;
- Indicate the forms of payment accepted.

## **Testimonials/Solicitation:**

The Member may not directly or indirectly solicit patients in person, by telephone, e-mail, or any other means of communication that is not considered to be a public medium.

A Member shall not initiate unsolicited contact or communication with a member of the public to invite them to use his/her services. Example: Using a computerized, random-dialing or text message service would be considered a form of uninvited solicitation.

The Member does not include testimonials or reviews on any advertisements nor may they provide links to testimonials/reviews on their websites, in printed formats for distribution or stated verbally to patients or the public.

The member does not solicit or encourage reviews from their patients.

This does not prevent the Member from advertising to the general public, calling/emailing a patient to remind them of an upcoming appointment/service, sending referrals, change in clinic policies or health care notices

## **Related Documents**

*Manitoba Naturopathic Act*  
*MNA Therapeutic Boundaries*  
*MNA Vaccination Policy*  
*Personal Health Information Act (PHIA)*

## **Purpose:**

When naturopathic doctors have an online presence they remain accountable to the same ethical, professional and legal standards required in their in-person practice. A personal social media post becomes a professional post when topics, opinions and comments relating to the practice of naturopathy are posted. The related documents listed below apply to the personal and professional social media accounts of its members.

Members are strongly encouraged to create separate personal and business accounts and ensure that their personal feeds are private and they remain mindful of which accounts they are posting to.

Social Media Guidelines for members of the Manitoba Naturopathic Association, pertain to any use of social medial channels. These include but are not limited to: Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Reddit, Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok, blogs etc.

## **Soliciting Social Media Followers and the Public:**

Members should be mindful when broadcasting or surveying the public/ followers with health related questions. Such actions can lead to the provision of treatment and health advice. Members may not offer discounts to followers or the public who provide feedback or comments.

## **Managing Your Social Media and Online Presence:**

- ✓ Patient privacy and confidentiality must always be maintained. Any identifiable information is not allowed; including but not limited to, \*photographs, names etc. Privacy settings are helpful, but they are not foolproof and subject to change
- ✓ Do not provide clinical treatment or advice through social media
- ✓ Do not respond to individual patient or public posts seeking naturopathic treatment or advice. Refer all queries through your clinic/practice.
- ✓ Testimonials and reviews are not allowed on member's personal or professional sites
- ✓ Assume all online content is accessible by the public including the media
- ✓ Any post can affect both the naturopathic doctor's personal reputation as well as that of the profession. Do not post anything that could be seen to be unprofessional
- ✓ \*Aesthetic Procedures: Discreet, close-up photos of patients who agree to have a before and after photo of their treatment(s) used by their ND in promotional materials may be used as long as the patient agrees in writing and it is documented in the chart.

## **Related Documents**

*Manitoba Naturopathic Act*  
*MNA Vaccination Policy*  
*MNA Therapeutic Boundaries*  
*Personal Health Information Act*