

# Advertising Nursing Services

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This document replaces *Advertising Nursing Services* (2011)



Registered Nurses (RNs) and/or Nurse Practitioners (NPs) who are self-employed, advertise nursing services to promote their business, and inform consumers of available options. Advertising includes any message controlled directly or indirectly by the self-employed RN/NP that is communicated in any medium (i.e., business cards, publications, broadcasts, internet advertisements, or social media) to consumers with the intent to influence their choice, opinion or behavior (Advertising Standards Canada, 2016). Advertising nursing services should include:

- the name of the business and a description of the nursing services being offered;
- the name and credentials of the RN(s) or NP(s) and their role within the business; and
- other business matters relevant to being accurate, responsible, respectful and transparent.

CRNNL maintains the public's trust in the nursing profession by setting the expectations for advertising nursing services to ensure the public is given accurate, factual and verifiable information. CRNNL does not approve advertisements for business owners. However, the CRNNL can assist you with the exploration of regulatory standards related to advertising nursing services.

## Standards

As members of a self-regulating profession, RNs and NPs who advertise nursing services must comply with regulatory requirements as outlined in the *Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners* and *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*; applicable legislation (e.g., the federal *Competition Act* and the provincial *Consumer Protection and Business Practices Act*), and in accordance with relevant documents (e.g., the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards) and business policies. Failure to meet these requirements may lead to inappropriate advertising and could result in conduct deserving of sanction. Nursing services must be advertised in a manner that is in the best interest of the public (consumers) and does not distract from the integrity and dignity of the nursing profession (CRNNS, 2017).

RNs/NPs MUST ensure that:

1. advertisements pertain to activities only within the scope of professional nursing practice and specific scope of the RN/NP:
  - RN and NP are protected titles that cannot be used to gain personal credibility in business situations that are not considered to be within the profession of nursing practice (e.g., a real estate agent advertising a new home listing as an RN).
2. advertisements do not contain, either directly or indirectly, by omission or by implication, any inaccurate, deceptive or otherwise misleading claims, statements, illustrations or representations (e.g., sensational advertising - unrealistic price comparisons or exaggerated claims as to the worth or value of a service; guaranteeing a pain free experience; promotional advertising - scientific claims, ads that exploit superstitions, or display a disregard for safety) (Code of Ethics, 2017).
3. ethical decision-making has been demonstrated in the advertisement of nursing services:
  - actual or potential conflicts of interest that arise from their professional roles and relationships are identified, disclosed and resolved (Code of Ethics, 2017);
  - ethically managed (e.g., it is unethical to use your professional designation to lead the public to believe that one product is better than the rest). The endorsement of a product or service without providing information about other options could mislead the public and compromise trust (NANB, 2015);



- the potential risks associated with the use of testimonials, endorsements or other representations of opinion are identified and ethically managed (e.g., the potential to breach privacy and confidentiality). Testimonials and endorsements must reflect the genuine, reasonably current opinion of the individual, group or organization; based on adequate information and must not be deceptive (e.g., it would be misleading to post or publish only positive opinions);
  - informed consent is obtained, and privacy and confidentiality are always maintained (e.g., when using audiovisual materials, radio, Internet, before and after photos of clients, etc.). RNs/NPs must also adhere to applicable business policies (e.g., use of disclaimers such as 'individual results may vary').
4. advertisements do not contain comparative statements that claim or imply superiority over others (The Canadian Code of Advertising Standards, 2016).

RNs/NPs are responsible and accountable to monitor all advertisements to ensure they meet and continue to meet these expectations regardless of who published/posted the advertisement.



## References and Resources

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