

Advertising Review Committee Report

January 2021:

For further council discussion,

The U of S College of Dentistry has returned a letter (see attached) to the CDSS asking us to reconsider our decision to limit their advertising to that of the Advertising Standard. Previously the U of S CoD was granted leniency to advertise in ways which would have been deemed non-compliant for all other members. For example: Listing specific services provided, implied specialties, discussion of reduced fees, etc. The College has recently increased the frequency and scope of their advertisements which has upset members who compete with the student clinics. Council's decision after discussion at the October meeting was to treat the U of S CoD the same as all other members, and require them to advertise within the guidelines of the Advertising Standard.

Commented [1]:

Mandate:

The Advertising Review Committee (ARC) is a council committee and is a sub-committee of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC). Subject to the Dental Disciplines Act (The Act) Section 15 (2)(o) and CDSS Proposed Regulatory Bylaw 3.10, the ARC is to regulate advertising by its members by implementing the current CDSS Advertising Standard.

Objectives:

The ARC, at the request of PCC, council or the registrar shall:

- (a) review and investigate advertising concerns and complaints taking any steps necessary.
- (b) provide a written report to the PCC.
- (c) preview CDSS member advertising and provide a written report back to the member.

The CDSS Advertising Standard states:

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.

CDSS Advertising Standard Revisions:

October 2019 revision to the Advertising Standard

- 15(vii) discounts (was added)
- 17(ii) as per 14 above, (was removed)
- 17(iii) as per 15 above (was removed)

January 2020 revision to the Advertising Standard

- 15(vii) discounts (was removed)

Advertising to the public by dentists is a right and allowed by the CDSS. The content must be compliant with the CDSS Advertising Standard to prevent public harm and protect the integrity of the profession. The Advertising Standard was developed by the CDSS Council and has evolved in response to concerns

and on the advice of legal counsel - and is deemed to be defensible based on previous Supreme Court of Canada decisions.

The College of Dental Surgeons of Saskatchewan (CDSS) members are responsible for any communication and advertising media that has a bearing on their practice. Dentistry in Saskatchewan continues to be a self-regulating profession. The ARC appreciates submissions for both pre evaluation and complaint. As in the past, the vast majority of the CDSS membership demonstrates compliance and support for the CDSS Advertising Bylaws, Standard, and guidelines.

The following are some of the more common advertising issues being encountered by some of our CDSS members:

1. Search engine results that are sponsored (CDSS Advertising Standard 18xii)
2. Social media advertisements that are sponsored. (CDSS Advertising Standard 18xi, 22)
3. "Best of" or ranked lists of dentists in a specific area are considered advertising, and many of these websites, newspapers, and magazines are listing dentists without their knowledge. The ARC recommends that dentists monitor their online presence, and ensure that any information contained on ranking system listings is compliant with the Advertising Standard.

The ARC recommends that all CDSS members that are actively advertising:

1. Ensure that they themselves, their staff, and or agents who are responsible for such advertising duties, read, familiarize, and understand the Advertising Bylaws and Standard.
2. Submit draft advertisements to the ARC for evaluation and approval prior to distribution.
3. Preview the draft advertisements themselves prior to submission to the ARC.

Please feel free to contact the Advertising Review Committee with any questions or concerns that you may have.

Thank you to Harold Weiss, Dean Zimmer, Nina Moe, and Mike Fowler for their time, efforts, and commitment to the profession of dentistry. As always, a big thank you to Marion Lafreniere and Tania Deforest for managing and organizing all of the heavy lifting of the committee.

Again, the CDSS is not limiting advertising, but it wishes to control the content of advertisements to promote a high standard of professionalism and protect the public from confusing or misleading advertising.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Michael Fowler, Chair, Advertising Review Committee

Dr. Kevin Saganski, Co-Chair, Advertising Review Committee