
HEALTH CARE CLAIMS IN ADVERTISING, WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA



Standard of Practice S-023

Quality Assurance Committee

APPROVED BY COUNCIL: NOVEMBER 25, 2021 (CAME INTO EFFECT FEBRUARY 25, 2022)

Note to Readers: In the event of any inconsistency between this document and the legislation that affects chiropractic practice, the legislation governs.

INTENT AND OBJECTIVES

- To outline CCO's expectations that health care claims related to the benefits of chiropractic care in members' advertising, websites and social media are:
 - within the chiropractic scope of practice,
 - accurate, factual, verifiable and objective,
 - supported by generally acceptable evidence; and
 - otherwise compliant with CCO standards of practice, policies and guidelines.
- To create cohesiveness between Standard of Practice S-001: Chiropractic Scope of Practice and Standard of Practice S-016: Advertising.

DESCRIPTION OF STANDARD

Health Care Claims in Advertising, Websites and Social Media

A member must give consideration to the following factors when making health care claims as to the benefit of chiropractic care in advertising, websites and social media:

- Does the claim fall within the chiropractic scope of practice?
- Is the claim based on accurate, factual, verifiable, and objective information?
- Is the claim supported by generally acceptable evidence?
- Is the claim otherwise compliant with CCO standards of practice, policies and guidelines?

A member is authorized to make and/or communicate a diagnosis or clinical impression within the chiropractic scope of practice, as described in the *Chiropractic Act, 1991*, as follows:

The practice of chiropractic is the assessment of conditions related to the spine, nervous system and joints and the diagnosis, prevention and treatment, primarily by adjustment, of,

- (a) dysfunctions or disorders arising from the structures or functions of the spine and the effects of those dysfunctions or disorders on the nervous system; and
- (b) dysfunctions or disorders arising from the structures or functions of the joints.

Generally Acceptable Evidence

When assessing whether there is acceptable evidence for making health care claims in advertising, websites and social media and communication to patients and members of the public, a member must comply with the following:

- The health care claim must relate to the chiropractic scope of practice;
- Evidence supporting the health care claim must be properly communicated to the public in a manner that:
 - Is accurate, verifiable, objective, clear and concise,
 - Is not false or misleading
 - Does not include a guarantee of success of care,
 - Clearly communicates what is the level of evidence and source of any cited study,
 - Does not exaggerate or extrapolate the results of any evidence,
 - Is communicated in a manner that is understandable to the public, providing appropriate citation(s) from reputable source(s).
- The member must use caution in communicating a health care claim related to a case study or similar study. This includes citing a reputable source, clearly communicating that the results of a study may not be typical of patients, and neither exaggerating nor extrapolating the results of a study;
- In communicating a health care claim in advertising, websites and social media, the member must not communicate a health care claim that is beyond the chiropractic scope of practice, includes a possible breach of a CCO standard of practice, policy or guideline, is not supported by generally acceptable evidence, or involves a risk of harm to the public.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Regulation 852/93: Professional Misconduct

The following are acts of professional misconduct for the purposes of clause 51.1(c) of the Health Professions Procedural Code:

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2. Contravening a standard of practice of the profession or failing to maintain the standard of practice expected of members of the profession.
14. Providing a diagnostic or therapeutic service that is not necessary
33. Engaging in conduct or performing an act that, having regard to all the circumstances, would reasonably be regarded by members as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional.

This standard of practice should be read in conjunction with:

- Standard of Practice S-001: Chiropractic Scope of Practice
- Standard of Practice S-016: Advertising
- Guideline G-012: Use of Social Media
- Guideline G-016: Advertising
- Guideline G-023: Health Care Claims in Advertising, Websites and Social Media