

## Advertising by doctors

Members often ask Medisec whether they can advertise their practice.

When considering the question of advertising, doctors must comply with section 50 of the Medical Council's *Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners*, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2024

The text of the relevant paragraph is set out below, followed by queries frequently raised.

### **50. Fees, advertising and provision of practice information**

#### **50.1 Fees**

*The fees you charge should be appropriate to the services you provide. The schedule of fees or envisaged costs should be made available to the patients before the consultation and treatment commences.*

#### **50.2 Information**

*50.2.1 Patients and professional colleagues may rely on information you provide. You must ensure that any information you give is accurate and valid. You must not make claims, that cannot be substantiated, for the effectiveness of treatments.*

*50.2.2 In providing information about yourself or about the services you provide, you must not exploit or damage the trust and confidence that patients and the public have in doctors.*

#### **50.3 Advertising**

*50.3.1 Advertising in relation to the services you provide should be responsible, accurate, ethical, legal, and truthful.*

*50.3.2 Advertising and information provided about your practice must only include reference to your having a specialty if the specialty is one recognised by the Medical Council and you are entered for that specialty in the Specialist Division of the Register.*

*50.3.3 Where your services are advertised, the advertisement should provide appropriate information about fees that apply to these services.*

### **Frequently asked questions:**

#### **Can doctors advertise in a newspaper or online?**

There is no bar to doctors advertising their practice in a newspaper or online, subject to the advertising being responsible, accurate, ethical, legal, and truthful and where your services are advertised, the advertisement should provide appropriate information about fees that apply to these services. You **must** only include reference to your having a specialty if the specialty is one recognised by the Medical Council and you are entered for that specialty in the Specialist Division of the Register.

#### **Can a doctor advertise to inform the public of a re-location of their practice?**

You can advertise your practice by publicising the name and address of the practice, the practice hours and contact details. However, you should ensure that any information advertised about the practice is accurate and valid and does not make claims, that cannot be substantiated, for the effectiveness of treatments..

**Can a doctor advertise their practice on the same flyer as a Pharmacy or a private clinic?**

Yes, but you should be aware of any potential conflicts of interest. Section 54 of the Medical Council's Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2024 states that you should identify, avoid where possible, and manage such conflicts and you must not let financial considerations influence or appear to influence your management of patients. You must also tell patients about any beneficial interest that you, or anyone with whom you have a close personal or business relationship, have in relation to an individual or organisation providing healthcare such as a pharmacy or private clinic.

"The contents of this publication are indicative of current developments and contain guidance on general medico legal queries. It does not constitute and should not be relied upon as definitive legal, clinical or other advice and if you have any specific queries, please contact Medisec for advice".

