

**Advertising**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 As the regulatory body for the complementary healthcare sector, CNHC has produced a Code of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (the Code).for all registered practitioners

1.2 The Code sets out the behaviours expected of all those on the CNHC register.

1.3 The Code has been well received and is already widely used.

1.4 The Code is, however, deliberately designed to give generic professional principles-based advice and CNHC recognises that there will be occasions where additional information is required. Such advice is likely to be:

- i) either where profession specific advice is needed
- ii) or where additional generic information is required;

1.5 In the case of profession specific advice, such advice would appropriately come from professional associations relating to the profession concerned.

1.6 Where additional generic information is required, CNHC will provide short, guidance sheets on the subject in hand, prepared in conjunction with representatives of the professions themselves and designed to give examples of good and poor practice. This is the first advice sheet of that nature.

**2. Background to this issue**

2.1 In September 2009 a number of complaints were made against certain CNHC registrants in relation to what was considered to be inappropriate advertising on certain practitioner web sites.

2.2 The CNHC Investigating Panel upheld the complaints but found that the individuals' fitness to practise was not impaired as there was no deliberate attempt to mislead.

2.3 It was agreed that the most appropriate way to deal with the issues was to ask the practitioners to modify their web site and also to provide additional information on advertising to all to assist practitioners, as this is likely to be a subject which will come under increasing scrutiny.

### 3. CNHC Code of Conduct, Performance and Ethics

3.1 Clause 15 of the Code states:

*You must follow CNHC guidelines in relation to advertising your services.*

*'Any advertising you undertake in relation to your professional activities must be accurate. Advertisements must not be misleading, false, unfair or exaggerated. You must not claim that your personal skills, equipment or facilities are better than anyone else's.*

*If you are involved in advertising or promoting any other product or service, you must make sure that you use your knowledge, healthcare skills, qualifications and experience in an accurate and professionally responsible way. You must not make or support unjustifiable statements relating to particular products or services. Any potential financial rewards to you should be made explicit and play no part at all in your advice or recommendations of products and services that you give to patients, clients and users.'*

**3.2 This advice is still relevant and we would strongly advise you to read it carefully and adhere to its contents.** In the section below, in addition, we have given some examples of good practice and also some examples of potentially misleading statements which would be difficult to justify if challenged. Challenge will frequently, but not exclusively, be made in relation to the nature of the evidence for any claim.

**3.3 . Do remember that making inappropriate or unsubstantiated claims applies not only to what you write but also what you say, for example on the phone or face to face.**

### 4. CNHC Guidance

4.1 All guidance has to be taken in context. However we hope that the following examples will give a useful steer as to what is likely to be acceptable/not acceptable.

Good practice: DO SAY things like:

It is believed that

There is a view that

x may help/assist

Many people have found that.....(as long as you can justify the statement)

x has been found, in some instances, to...

x could help/improve

You can quote individuals who have found your treatment helpful, with their permission

Bad practice: DON'T SAY things like::

x will cure.....

x will improve...

x has been proven to...

x will treat

x will enhance

## **5. Your Professional Association**

Several professional associations have produced helpful detailed guidance on advertising and you should check to see if this is the case for your own organisation(s).

## **6. Other advice**

Helpful information and advice on advertising is also available on the Advertising Standards Agency website at [www.asa.org.uk](http://www.asa.org.uk) It is also important to review your advertising against the provisions of the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) Code at [www.cap.org.uk](http://www.cap.org.uk).

Mjw 5 May 2010