

GUIDE ON ADVERTISING FOR PHARMACISTS & PHARMACIES

A INTRODUCTION

- 1 As pharmacy is a profession, pharmacists are prohibited from publishing or distributing any advertisements concerning their practice as pharmacists. However, advertisements may be permitted under certain circumstances.
- 2 This guide is therefore drawn up for pharmacists in the areas of advertising of pharmacists and pharmacies. It provides advice on good professional practice, and should help pharmacists to interpret and avoid breaching the Code of Ethics. A breach of the Code of Ethics could form the basis of a complaint of misconduct.
- 3 Guidelines cannot cover every situation. When in doubt, the advice of the Singapore Pharmacy Board should be sought.

B CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE ADVERTISING IS PERMITTED

- 1 A pharmacist may publish or distribute an advertisement concerning his practice as a pharmacist, provided that the advertisement is restricted to name, academic qualifications, address and telephone number in business/name card.
- 2 A pharmacy may publish or distribute an advertisement concerning its practice as a pharmacy, provided that the advertisement is restricted to its address, days and hours of service and telephone number in the media, and as part of the letterhead in their business stationery.
- 3 When advertising in telephone and other local directories, entries should be limited to the standard entry and may include hours of service.
- 4 A pharmacist may use the terms 'dispensing pharmacist', 'prescriptions', 'pharmacist', 'night pharmacy', 'night dispensing', or such other terms as may be approved by the Board, as a description on a fascia or other appropriate position on the premises of a pharmacy or pharmacy department.
- 5 A pharmacist may advertise goods and services, other than those used in his practice as a pharmacist, where such advertising does not, either directly or indirectly, encourage indiscriminate or unnecessary use of drugs and medicines from another pharmacist, for example, surgical goods such as gloves, cosmetics or other non-medicinal products. A discreet notice relating to pregnancy testing service, urinoanalysis, patient counselling services, blood glucose testing, patient medication records services, drug information centre or blood pressure testing, may be exhibited at the premises.
- 6 A dispensing pharmacist may wear a nametag bearing his name and designation as 'pharmacist'.
- 7 The display of qualification(s) of a pharmacist on stationery, as well as on any part of his premises, should be discreet and should be no more than the qualification(s) or higher qualification(s) officially entered in the Register of Pharmacists.

C CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE ADVERTISING IS NOT PERMITTED

- 1 Canvassing to promote dispensing or any other professional service, or to promote the sale by retail of medicinal products, other than veterinary drugs, should not be undertaken.
- 2 No advertisement or representation should be made in any manner, calculated to suggest that the professional skill of a pharmacist, or his facilities for pharmaceutical services, are of a higher order than those of other pharmacists; or in a manner reflecting adversely on the skill or ability or professional services rendered by other pharmacists.
- 3 No pharmacist should give any statement or testimonial upon any medicinal product or appliance, to any proprietor, manufacturer, distributor or vendor, for publication with the name and image of such pharmacist attached, other than way of an acknowledgement in an article published in a scientific journal. Pharmacists may, however, contribute articles of general interest to lay magazines or other non-scientific publications. They should take care not to endorse or promote any particular medicine or product. Only their names and qualifications may be stated in the article.
- 4 No pharmacist should exhibit, or cause to be exhibited, any sign plate, placard, painting, sculpture, replica design or representation visible to members of the public generally, which in the opinion of the Board is unethical, or which is calculated to be an advertisement of his practice as a pharmacist. Examples include advertising signs which are not physically attached to the pharmacy premises to which they refer such as signs in bus shelters, MRT stations and other buildings.

D LIABILITY OF PHARMACIST FOR CERTAIN ADVERTISEMENTS

- 1 Every advertisement published by or in the name of a person, firm or incorporated company, which in any manner implies or suggests that such advertisement is justified by or based on the practice of a pharmacist, would be deemed to be an advertisement by such pharmacist in the same manner as if it had been inserted by him personally.

E OTHER RESTRICTIONS

- 1 Every identifying sign in a pharmacy department of a hospital should be restricted to 'pharmacy', 'pharmacy department' or 'department of pharmacy' and could include the name of the hospital.
- 2 A pharmacist should exercise great care and do everything reasonably possible when speaking to the press or television, to ensure that he does not directly or indirectly contravene the Code of Ethics.