

Notice to the Professions

Website Marketing Requirements

March 24, 2021

The College's current bylaws came into effect June 29, 2020 and updated the requirements for registrants using websites to market or advertise their services. Bylaw 153 sets out the requirements for all registrants using websites to market or advertise their services as follows:

153. If a registrant uses a website to market his or her services, **the home page of the registrant's website must clearly show:**

- that the registrant is licensed in British Columbia;
- the physical location of the registrant's office or clinic;
- the registrant's 10-digit office or clinic telephone number;
- the contact information for the college; and
- a notice to clients that unresolved concerns they may have about the registrant's practice may be reported to the college.

The purpose of these provisions is to ensure members of the public can clearly identify regulated professionals and their licencing body. As the speech and hearing professions are relatively new regulated professions, identifying yourself as a regulated healthcare professional plays an important role in the public's understanding of the professions and ensuring safe access to care. **It has come to the College's attention that not all registrants include this information on their websites.**

If you have not updated your website to include the above information, please do so immediately as you are in contravention of the College's bylaws. Registrants who do not comply with the bylaws may be referred to the College's Inquiry Committee for further review and may require disciplinary action.

The following is an example of what compliance with the above requirements may look like:

[name of registrant, clinic location information, or "mobile clinic" if applicable] is licenced by and a registrant of the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of British Columbia.

Any unresolved concerns about a registrant's practice may be reported to:

College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of British Columbia
900 – 200 Granville Street
Vancouver, BC V6C 1S4
Phone: 604.742.6380
Toll-free: 1.888.742.6380

If many registrants' services are advertised on a registrant's website, the website may simply state that the relevant professionals are licenced by the College and provide the College's contact information as set out above. An example of this may look like:

[Audiologists, hearing instrument practitioners, and/or speech-language pathologists] are licenced by, and registrants of, the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of British Columbia.

Any unresolved concerns about a registrant's practice may be reported to:

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Registrants are also advised to review the sections of the College's bylaws pertaining to advertising generally, which set out the requirements for advertising and marketing practices for registrants.

152(2) A registrant must not engage in marketing his or her professional services or authorize marketing that

- a. is false,
- b. contains material inaccuracies,
- c. is reasonably capable of confusing, deceiving or misleading a member of the public,
- d. is likely to create in the mind of the recipient or intended recipient an unjustified expectation about the results that the registrant can achieve,
- e. exploits or takes advantage of the public's physical or emotional states, or the public's lack of knowledge of professional subject matters,
- f. contains claims or assertions that cannot be verified by a member of the public acting as a reasonable consumer of professional services,

- g. uses comparative statements that include reference to fees, services, products or facilities,
- h. implies that the registrant can obtain results
 - o not achievable by other registrants,
 - o by improperly influencing a public body or official, or any corporation, agency or person having any interest in the welfare of the recipient,
 - o by any other improper means, or
- i. compares the quality of services provided with those provided by
 - o another registrant,
 - o a person authorized to provide health care services under another enactment, or
 - o another health profession,
- j. tends to undermine the professionalism, ethics, integrity or dignity of the profession or otherwise brings the profession into disrepute, or
- k. is otherwise contrary to the public interest.

If you have questions about your advertising practices or questions about compliance with the College's bylaws, please contact the College.

If you would like to make a complaint about a registrant, please visit our Complaints page. The College does not accept anonymous complaints, and all complaints must be submitted in writing.