

Advertisement inappropriate

I would like to request that the editorial board review paid advertisement in our *Canadian Family Physician* journal, so that advertisements are consistent with our profession's ethics.

Physicians have been reminded by most professional bodies about conflicts of interest that arise when a physician accepts any "gift" from the pharmaceutical industry. Surely, an advertisement (NCH Healthcare advertisement, July 2006) that promises me a financial reward for referring a patient to a particular institution constitutes a conflict of interest. Such advertisements do not belong in *Canadian Family Physician*.

—Monique Moreau, MD, CCFP, FCFP
Everett, Ont
by e-mail

Response

I agree with you. The NCH Healthcare advertisement found in the July issue should not have run, as written, in *Canadian Family Physician* (CFP). The advertisement contravenes the Canadian Medical Association Code of Ethics, as it promises financial reward for referring patients. Fundamental responsibilities of Canadian physicians include considering first the well-being of patients and not exploiting them for personal advantage. The Code of Ethics clearly states that physicians should "avoid promoting, as a member of the medical profession, any service (except your own) or product for personal gain."¹

All advertising in CFP is reviewed before publication, and we reserve the right to edit, decline, or withdraw advertising at the discretion of the editorial department. All pharmaceutical advertising is precleared by the Pharmaceutical Advertising Advisory Board.

Nonpharmaceutical advertising not covered by the Pharmaceutical Advertising Advisory Board is subject to approval by CFP, including complying with the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code 1990. *Canadian Family Physician* also endorses the World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes.

In this circumstance the advertisement slipped through the CFP review and was published. *Canadian Family Physician* withdrew the advertisement for future issues.

Thank you for drawing our attention to this matter.
—Diane L. Kelsall, MD, MEd, CCFP, FCFP
Scientific Editor, *Canadian Family Physician*

Reference

1. Canadian Medical Association. Code of Ethics. Ottawa, Ont: Canadian Medical Association; 2004. Available from: http://www.cma.ca/index.cfm/ci_id/2419/la_id/1.htm. Accessed 2006 August 7.

Epocrates Rx a favourite tool

In the April 2006 issue, in a piece by Barbara Kermodé-Scott describing hand-held computers,¹ it was incorrectly stated that Epocrates Rx does not contain Canadian brands. In fact, it does list Canadian trade names for those drugs that are also licensed for use in the United States. Very few drugs that I use are missing from this program, and its ease of use and drug interaction checker make this a favourite tool for me.

—Henry Rappaport, MD, CCFP, FCFP
North York, Ont
by e-mail

Reference

1. Kermodé-Scott B. Hand-held computers a useful tool in medical practice [news]. *Can Fam Physician* 2006;52:542-3.

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Our *Editorial Advisory Board* is made up of family doctors from academic and community, rural and urban, and solo and group practices all across Canada. *We cover the country.*