

FACT SHEET 1

ADVERTISING REGULATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) defines an advertisement for a therapeutic good as, 'Any statement, pictorial representation or design, however made, that is intended, whether directly or indirectly, to promote the use or supply of the goods.'

Just like a website, radio or print advertisement, social media is therefore considered an advertisement, and content posted to your page must conform to the strict advertising regulations enforced by the TGA. When it comes to your social media strategy, therefore, here are five tips to help ensure you comply with the medical advertising regulations.

1. Keep your social media page free from testimonials It may be tempting to post them to your Facebook page or website, but glowing patient endorsements are not permitted in any advertising materials, and this includes your social media sites.

2. Avoid linking to non-compliant information Just as it's your responsibility to ensure all the content on your own website is compliant with Australian medical advertising legislation, it's also your responsibility not to link to any other website or source of information that breaches the rules. It's therefore important you don't post links on your Twitter feed, blog or Facebook page to websites or other information sources such as documents with non-compliant information.

3. Manage what others post on your social media sites If someone posts content on your Facebook page that breaches advertising legislation – for example a testimonial or a link to an information source with non-compliant information – it's your responsibility to remove it. It's therefore worth ensuring a member of the team has the responsibility not only to post content, but to review and respond to what other people are posting on your social media channels.

4. Avoid financial promotions for therapeutic goods included in Schedule 3, 4 or 8 Discounts and competitions are a great way to engage your audience and promote your brand, but remember it's against medical advertising legislation to offer a financial incentive for procedures or goods listed as schedule 3, 4 or 8. That includes dermal fillers and anti-wrinkle injections. So if you're promoting a special offer, or conducting a competition via social media, make sure the prize is not included in Schedule 3, 4 or 8.

5. Remember not to imply your procedures are safe or pain free It may be true that you have been using a certain device or procedure in your clinic for five years with no side effects, but given social media is considered an advertisement, this isn't the place to talk about it. Steer clear of referring to any of your procedures as safe or painless and remember, 'an advertisement for therapeutic goods must not: contain any claim, statement or implication that the goods are safe or that their use cannot cause harm or that they have no side-effects.'

If in doubt, talk to an expert. The team at Bella Media are experts in medical advertising and work closely with the TGA to stay abreast of changing regulations. Call 02 9398 2755 to talk to us about your social networking strategy and management.