



## College of Dental Hygienists of BC Marketing FAQ's

### **1. How would I be able to offer a discounted fee to my clients and still ensure I am not being fraudulent in billing the insurance company?**

- It would be considered appropriate to offer a 20% discount on a particular service prior to billing. Therefore, a service of \$25.00 would then be billed out at \$20.00 to both the client and to the insurance company. It would not be considered appropriate or ethical to inform the client that you would provide a 20% discount on the service, then in turn bill the full \$25.00 amount to the insurance company.

### **2. What is the difference between offering a discount and using a sliding fee scale?**

- A **discount** would be offered to all clients regardless of insurance coverage. That discount would be on the initial service fee, and therefore the insurance company would also receive the same discounted amount (as outlined in the example for question 1).
- A **sliding fee** implies that on an individual basis, the client may be offered a reduced fee that would not be offered to a similar population or group of people. This reduced fee usually does not apply to those who have dental insurance.

### **3. What types of incentives would be acceptable to advertise?**

- Provided the incentive is not a free treatment (e.g. free sport mouth guards or free whitening), and is related to safe care within the Dental Hygiene Scope of Practice, it would be acceptable.
- As an example, it would be acceptable to advertise that “during the month of April, all new clients to the clinic will receive a free electric toothbrush”.
- It would also be acceptable to advertise a free consult for the appropriateness of whitening for the month of August.
- It would be acceptable to offer a special on whitening for the month of May, such as a 20% discount on the original price. However, any restrictions that apply must be specified. For example: “Tooth whitening may not be appropriate for all individuals, contraindications or considerations will be identified during the assessment portion of the appointment.”

### **4. Why is a group coupon not allowed?**

- A group coupon is not allowed as a third party is being paid by the dental hygienist to promote the practice, which is considered a conflict of interest.

### **5. Would I be able to promote a product in my practice that I have a financial interest in, such as a nutritional supplement?**

- This would be considered a conflict of interest as you would be profiting from the sale of the product. As a dental professional, you are in a position of trust with the client and this type of promotion could be seen as coercion.

**6. I really try to provide gentle care, why can I not promote this on my Facebook™ page?**

- Words like “gentle” in advertising are subjective and as such have a connotation of comparing one’s services to the next dental hygienist. This also implies that services from another provider might not be “gentle” and would therefore unfairly benefit the registrant who advertised based on this assumption.

**7. I am not clear on why I cannot advertise that I provide massage therapy in my dental hygiene practice as this can relax my clients.**

- Massage therapy is a restricted activity and is not part of the Dental Hygiene Scope of Practice. As such, it would be false advertising to state that, as a dental hygienist, you would be able to provide these services.

**8. Would I be able to say that I provide a dental hygiene examination in my advertising?**

- Yes, dental hygienists are allowed to say they offer dental hygiene examinations, as this is not a misleading statement. However, the use of the terms “dental exam” or “oral health exam” would be considered confusing as the client may think they were going to pay for and receive the same comprehensive dental exam that would be provided by a dentist, which includes aspects such as a caries diagnosis. A caries diagnosis is not part of the Dental Hygiene Scope of Practice in BC.

**9. I like to show my registrant status on social media. Would I be able to post the CDHBC logo on these sites?**

- The use of the CDHBC logo is not permitted for registrant advertising and/or for use on social media sites.

**10. I have taken special training for tooth whitening. Am I able to say that I am certified in whitening procedures?**

- No, it would be inappropriate to present yourself as an “expert” or “certified” in a procedure. Using such terms is misleading to the public and would suggest that there are specialties within the practice of dental hygiene. All registrants in the Full Registration categories are allowed to practice the full process of dental hygiene care, providing they have the appropriate education and training.

**11. Am I able to place an ad in a local newspaper stating that I am moving to a new practice in order to let my clients from the past 15 years know where I am going?**

- You are not allowed to solicit clients from your current practice to move to your new practice. However, providing that there are no restrictions in your contract with the employer, you would be able to place an announcement in a local newspaper indicating the new location where you will be practicing. Clients are not owned by a dental practitioner and as such, they have the right to choose where and by whom they receive their dental hygiene care.