



Guideline: Treatment in Group or Public Settings

The College has become aware of new approaches to the delivery of naturopathic medical services in non-clinical environments, including group or public settings. Delivery of services in this manner may include inducements, enticements, and/or incentives to patients such as a “host” discount, or “2-for-1” treatment. Inducements, enticements, and/or incentives to patients may interfere with patients’ autonomy and naturopathic doctors’ fiduciary responsibility. Specific concerns include:

- The minimization of the inherent risk of treatment, whether this is understated by the naturopathic doctor or minimized in the mind of the patient;
- The clouding of the context in which patient’s consent is sought or given;
- The potential violation of the patient’s right to privacy.

The College is also aware that marketing of naturopathic medical services delivered in group or public settings may represent the offered treatment as a “fun” or social activity. This, in the College’s view, has the potential to diminish the perception of the services as a professional treatment, which in turn may affect the patient’s ability to give appropriate informed consent.

The purpose of these guidelines is to alert registrants to potential issues that may arise with delivery of services in a group or public environment and to remind registrants of their professional and ethical obligations in these settings.

Registrants who deliver naturopathic medical services in a group or public setting must meet all standards of practice required of a naturopathic physician, including but not limited to:

1. Must not agree to treat a patient in a group or public setting if it is not in the patient’s best interest, considering the patient’s existing health status, specific health care needs and specific circumstances;
2. Must ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the patient’s personal health information;
3. Must obtain valid informed consent;
4. Must keep proper medical records;
5. Must not seek informed consent from or provide naturopathic medical services to anyone whose ability to consent is impaired by alcohol or drugs;
6. Must ensure adequate insurance coverage;
7. Must maintain universal precautions including but not limited to infection control procedures;
8. Must ensure appropriate emergency procedures and equipment are in place; and
9. Must not offer or promote naturopathic medical services in a way that may lead to perception of coercion, inducement, enticement, or inappropriate incentive, including offers of prizes, gifts, gift certificates, card points, bonus points, discounts, or time-limited benefits for naturopathic medical services.

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