



Advertising

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Dentists who promote their dental practice to the public should be aware of the laws and regulations governing advertising. A dentist may not, on behalf of himself, a partner or associate, participate in any form of public communication which contains a deceptive or misleading statement or claim. A prevalent example is that if you are a general dentist you may not represent yourself to be a “specialist” or state that your office “specializes” in specific areas of dentistry, such as “we specialize in family dentistry” or “implant dentistry is our specialty.” You may of course list the services that your office provides, but only “specialists” recognized by the Dental Board may use the word “specialist” or “specialize” or “specialty.”

Any form of public communication, print or electronic, is considered to be advertising. Examples of other communications that may be considered to be misrepresentations or deceptions are:

- **Offering or implying to do dental work in a superior manner**
- **Claims that are intended to create unjustified expectations**
- **Undifferentiated claims to do dental work painlessly**
- **Guaranteeing or implying satisfaction, except to guarantee to return the fee if patient is not satisfied**
- **Failure to include the name of the responsible licensed dentist who provides dental service at the location advertised, i.e., advertising with your practice name only**
- **Rendering services at more than the fees advertised**

Dentists must retain a copy of all advertising for a period of at least 3 years from the date of publication. Violation of the regulations pertaining to advertising shall constitute unprofessional conduct and may result in disciplinary action against the dentist.

Note that the above list of violations is not exhaustive. Reference should be made to the actual laws and regulations. Regulations regarding advertising are contained in the Code of Maryland Regulations, (COMAR) 10.44.06 and may be obtained by contacting the Dental Board.

Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners

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