Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics (Publicity) Regulations 2004

Frequently Asked Questions

Advertising Media

1. Can a healthcare institution (HCI) provide information about its services in other media that are not listed in the Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics (PHMC) Publicity Regulations?

   HCI can only publish information about its services in media listed in PHMC (Publicity) Regulation which are:
   
   (i) newspapers  
   (ii) directories  
   (iii) medical journals  
   (iv) magazines  
   (v) brochures  
   (vi) leaflets  
   (vii) pamphlets, and  
   (viii) Internet.

   HCI cannot publish information about its services in media not listed in the PHMC (Publicity) Regulations e.g. billboard / light box, banner, poster.

Information on HCI’s Services

2. Is there any limit to the number of times that HCIs can publish information about their services in the newspapers or any of the other approved media?

   There are no limits to the number of times that HCIs can publish information about their services. However, the licensee must ensure that all relevant requirements under the PHMC (Publicity) Regulations are complied with at all times.

3. Is there any restriction on the size of the media for publishing of information of the services of HCI?

   There is no restriction on the size. However, the licensee must ensure compliance with all relevant requirements under the PHMC (Publicity) Regulations e.g. the publicity must not be offensive, ostentatious or in bad taste such as to undermine the honour and dignity of the medical, dental or nursing profession.
General Principles

4. What does “the publicity must not provide information to the public in such a manner as to amount to soliciting or encouraging the use of services provided by or at any healthcare institution” mean?

   It means that HCIs can only provide factual information such as the types of services provided, clinic address, contact numbers, opening hours and charges (actual pricing). Phrases such as "discounts", "0% instalments", "preferential rates", "free screening" etc. cannot be used to entice the public to use the HCI’s services.

5. Can HCIs tie up with a club or society, such that members of the club or society can identify themselves at the HCIs to get a preferential rate or special treatment package?

   We have no objection to any tie-up or contractual agreement between a licensed healthcare institution and a club or society for the healthcare institution to provide preferred rates or special treatment packages to members of the club or society. However, the publicity for such arrangements to the members of the club or society must adhere to the PHMC (Publicity) Regulations. In particular, the information must not be provided in such a manner as to amount to soliciting or encouraging the use of the services provided by or at any healthcare institution. Phrases such as "discounts", "0% instalments", "preferential rates", "free screening" etc. cannot be used to entice the public to use the HCI’s services. Instead, HCIs should just list down the exact price for the packages / services.

6. Can HCIs conduct promotions like giving of souvenirs, promotional coupons, lucky draws and sale campaigns etc.?

   No, HCIs are not allowed to conduct such promotions as this amounts to soliciting or encouraging the use of services provided by or at the HCI.

7. Can HCIs put up directional signs to inform the public on their location?

   Yes, but HCIs would have to ensure that their directional signs are in compliance with other relevant laws under other authorities e.g. Land Transport Authority.

8. What phrases are considered laudatory?

   Examples of laudatory phrases are: “best medical care available”, “world class medical services”, “state of the art technology”. 
Publicity outside Singapore

9. Can HCIs advertise outside Singapore?

Yes. HCIs can advertise or promote their services outside Singapore and comply with the relevant laws including advertising rules of that country. However, if the advertisement is also accessible in Singapore, it must comply with relevant requirements under the PHMC (Publicity) Regulations.

Publicity by Third Party

10. Can HCIs engage the services of an advertising company or a third party to publish information on their services?

Yes, as long as the information provided complies with the requirements under the PHMC (Publicity) Regulations.