



COLLEGE OF  
DENTURISTS  
OF ONTARIO

# *Guidelines for Advertising and Clinic Naming*



# Table of Contents

<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>3</b>
True, Accurate, Factual, and Verifiable .....	3
Responsibility.....	4
Solicitation of New Patients.....	4
Before and After Photos.....	4
Testimonials .....	5
Patient Reviews.....	6
Complimentary Consultations.....	6
<b>Clinic Naming .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Clinic Name Approval Process Removed.....	6
Expectations .....	7
Do I have to register the name with the Ontario government?.....	7
Clinic Name Examples .....	8
<b>Table of Changes.....</b>	<b>9</b>



## Overview

The College's Standard of Practice: Advertising & Clinic Names establishes the College's expectations of Registered Denturists in relation to advertising their practices and the naming of denturist clinics. This Guide to the Standard offers further information regarding elements surrounding advertising and clinic naming and how to apply the Standard in practice.

The College permits Denturists to use appropriate advertising to communicate the type and availability of their services so that potential and existing patients and referral sources can make informed decisions.

### ***True, Accurate, Factual, and Verifiable***

The College's Standard of Practice: Advertising & Clinic Naming and the Professional Misconduct Regulation require advertisements to be true, accurate, factual, and verifiable.

To be verifiable, a Denturist must ensure that whatever they say in their advertisement must have some independent proof to verify it. Ask yourself how you could prove to the College that the statements in the advertisement were true.

Different kinds of advertising claims will require different kinds of proof.

For example:

- A claim about clinical outcomes might require the same level of proof that you would see in a peer-reviewed journal.
- Other types of statements, such as saying "parking is free for patients" would simply require that the claim be true and could be double checked if necessary.
- Making a claim that your services will give a patient "a perfect smile" is not a verifiable statement and uses a superlative ("perfect"); neither of which would be considered acceptable under the Standard of Practice.

Part of ensuring that any advertising is true, accurate, factual, and verifiable is also ensuring that it is easy to understand, not intentionally confusing, and not misleading by either omitting relevant information or including non-relevant information.



## ***Responsibility***

Denturists are responsible for any advertisement over which they have control. Denturists are also responsible for any advertising that refers to denturism services provided in their place of practice.

Advertisements placed by others on behalf of a Denturist or placed by employers advertising denturism services must be reviewed by the Denturist to ensure that they comply with the Standard of Practice for Advertising & Clinic Naming. If an advertisement does not meet the Standard, the Denturist must take reasonable steps to correct the advertisement. Such steps may include making the employer aware of the expectations in the College's Standard, requesting changes in writing to any advertising that does not meet the Standard, and following up to make sure the changes have been made.

## ***Solicitation of New Patients***

Denturists are permitted as of July 1, 2024, to solicit or permit the solicitation of new patients through a variety of communication methods including in-person, by telephone, electronic communication or other means with the following restrictions.

1. The person who is being solicited must be advised, at the earliest possible time during the solicitation that:
  - a. the purpose of the communication is to solicit the use of the Denturist's professional services,
  - b. the person can end the solicitation immediately or at any time they wish to do so, and
2. the communication must end immediately if the person who is the subject of the solicitation elects to do so.

## ***Before and After Photos***

If before and after photos are used, Denturists must carefully ensure that they are accurate, portray typical outcomes, and inform patients that outcomes may vary.

Denturists should consider the following:

- Be of real, verifiable, and documented patients of yours.
- Accurately portray typical outcomes and inform patients that outcomes may vary.
- Photos should not be manipulated in any way (e.g. stock art, artificial intelligence, filters, enhanced).





- Only used if the patient (or their substitute decision maker) has provided express consent to the use of the photo including where it may be used e.g. website, social media, etc. The consent should be documented in the patient records and can be withdrawn at any time. If the patient withdraws consent, the Denturist must immediately within reason remove all photographs.
- Photos must not contain any testimonials.
- Follow the College's [Guide to Using Social Media and Other Means of Electronic Communication in Practice.](#)

## ***Testimonials***

The Ontario Ministry of Health does not permit regulated health care professionals in Ontario to publish testimonials. As such, in Ontario, you will not see testimonials for Audiologists, Dentists, Dental Hygienists, Optometrists, Physicians, Pharmacists, Psychologists, or any other regulated health care professional.

A testimonial is a written or spoken statement in which someone says that they used a product or service, says or implies that they benefitted from or liked it, or a written or spoken statement that praises someone's work, skill, or character.

**As of July 1, 2024, the College reiterates that Denturists are prohibited from using or permitting the use of testimonials from patients, former patients, or any other person in respect of the Denturist's practice.**

- This means Denturists do not solicit patients, former patients, or a patients' authorized representatives for testimonials.
- Denturists do not post or link to testimonials.
- Denturists do not use testimonials in their advertising.

The risk of harm posed by using testimonials in advertising include:

- Creating an unreasonable expectation of potential treatments.
- Fostering false, misleading, or deceptive advertising practices as they can be selectively published, edited, and can be easily faked.



## ***Patient Reviews***

Some patients may choose to use online reviews to make decisions about their choice of practitioners and potential treatment options. Reviews can appear on search engines, clinic websites, a service directory or booking websites, social media, discussion forums, or review platforms.

The College understands that patient reviews are generally outside of a Denturist's control, however, actions within a Denturist's control include not advertising, linking to, or soliciting reviews from patients, former patients, or patient's authorized representatives. This could include online reviews, insurance, or health professional rating sites.

## ***Complimentary Consultations***

If a Denturist advertises that they offer free or complimentary consultations, the components of that consultation must be clearly communicated to the public.

For example, if the consultation is a cursory assessment, and not a detailed examination, the person receiving the advertisement should understand that the only information provided during this assessment would be a general description of options for treatment.

Alternatively, if the consultation includes an examination and a detailed personalized assessment, the person receiving the advertisement should understand that the information provided will be used to create a patient-specific description of the options for treatment.

## **Clinic Naming**

### ***Clinic Name Approval Process Removed***

As of July 1, 2024, Denturists are no longer required to seek the Executive Committee's approval of a proposed clinic name and remit any fees prior to using the proposed clinic name. However, the College still expects clinic names to be professional, dignified, and to comply with the Standard of Practice.

**It is important for Denturists to ensure their clinic names meet the requirements prior to investing in signage, marketing, and other business expenses.** It can be a costly mistake should Denturists be required to update their clinic names to adhere to the standards. If Denturists are unsure whether their clinic names meet the advertising standard, please feel free to reach out to College Staff who can provide guidance.



## ***Expectations***

Just as with other advertising, Denturists are required to ensure that the names of their clinics are not misleading or confusing to the public.

As such, Denturists:

1. Are expected to use best efforts to ensure that their clinic names are not the same or similar to the name of another existing denture clinic within Ontario. This does not apply to Denturists owning multiple clinics who can share the same umbrella clinic name with different locations.
2. Should use the College's [Public Register](#) to run a search of their proposed clinic name to avoid any conflicts.
3. When purchasing or taking over an existing denture clinic, Denturists cannot include the previous Denturist owner's name in the clinic name in any manner including first name, middle name or surname. Denturists are permitted, however, to use the phrase: "formerly operated as (insert former clinic name)".

Clinic names cannot include terms that are not truthful or cannot be verified. Accordingly:

1. Descriptive terms that suggest superiority over other denture clinics or Denturists are not permitted.
2. Clinic names cannot include words or terms that are considered superlative e.g. perfect, elite, superior.

## ***Do I have to register the name with the Ontario government?***

Business name registration falls under the jurisdiction of the Ontario government. Denturists should seek legal advice from their own lawyers regarding any requirements they may need to meet.

Information can also be found on the Ontario Business Registry page of the [Service Ontario website](#).



### Clinic Name Examples

Clinic Name	Acceptable or Not Acceptable	Rationale
Masterpiece Denture Clinic	Not Acceptable	Clinic names must contain no superlatives, comparisons to, or claims of superiority over, another member's practice or expertise  The use of the word "Masterpiece" is considered a superlative expressing the highest or very high degree of quality that infers superiority in quality over the work of other denture clinics. As this claim is untrue, it is not permitted.
Perfect Denture Clinic or Perfect Smile Denture Clinic	Not Acceptable	The use of the word "Perfect" is considered a superlative expressing the highest or very high degree of quality that infers superiority in quality that cannot be matched by the work of another denture clinic. As this claim is untrue, it is not permitted.
Elite Denture Clinic	Not Acceptable	The use of the word "Elite" is considered a superlative expressing the highest or very high degree of quality that infers superiority in quality that cannot be matched by the work of another denture clinic. As this claim is untrue, it is not permitted.
John Doe Denture Design	Acceptable	
John Doe Denture & Implant Denture Clinic	Acceptable	
Delta Denture Clinics (Toronto)  Delta Denture Clinics (Kenora)	Acceptable	Denture clinics operating under the same ownership can share an umbrella clinic name with various locations denoted.





Toronto Mobile Denture Clinic	Acceptable	
Toronto Denture Specialists	Acceptable with Caution	<p>Note! The term "Specialists" can be tricky. When used to imply Denturism or Denturists as a whole, it is permissible.</p> <p>The use of specialist in reference to a specific Denturist or individual is not permitted as it implies superiority of one Denturist over another.</p> <p>E.g. John Doe, Denture Specialist, is not permitted as it refers to one Denturist having a speciality over another. John Doe Denture Specialists or phrases such as "your denture specialist" is permitted as it refers to Denturists as a whole.</p>

## Table of Changes

Date	Revision
July 11, 2024	Initial publication date