

Practice Names

*(a reprint of the Advisory issued in May 2000)

This Practice Advisory is intended to assist you in understanding your legal and professional responsibilities if you choose to practise under a practice name. From time to time, subsequent bulletins or advisories dealing with specific practice naming issues will be provided to further assist you in understanding your obligations to comply with the provincial regulations that govern all Ontario dentists.

Introduction

When members name their practice, pursuant to Section 7 of Ontario Regulation 853/93 made under the *Dentistry Act, 1991*, they must first register that name with the College. This is accomplished by filing a *Practice Name Registration Application Form*. The College does not approve all practice names; however, practice names that are, as the Regulation states “reasonably referable to and describe the location of the practice,” do not require the approval of the College’s Executive Committee.

Why has the RCDSO issued this practice advisory?

Originally, dentists were required to practise using the name under which they were registered and no other name. With changes to the regulations, dentists are now permitted to identify their practice in some way other than by using their individual name or names.

The purpose for practising under a practice name was to make it easier for the public to identify a particular dental office. For example, practice names were used for an office in which a group of dentists is working; for a dentist whose surname is difficult to pronounce; and/or to identify an office in a geographical location such as a mall, a plaza, or a specific intersection.



The College accepts that the use of a practice name could well be in the public interest, especially where the choice of names was to assist in identifying the location of the office. Therefore, the College has produced the following guidelines to advise dentists what is acceptable as a practice name. Members must comply with the specific sections of Regulation 853/93 governing professional misconduct relating to the use of designations and practice names. To assist you, the pertinent sections are found at the end of this document.

What are the guidelines to follow in selecting a practice name?

1. Reference to any area of dental treatment, other than the nine recognized specialty branches of dentistry, must not be included in a practice name. For example, implant, cosmetic and/or aesthetic dentistry as part of a practice name would not be approved by the College.

2. The use of adjectives are inappropriate as part of a practice name if they:

- are potentially misleading;
and/or
- are not verifiable by facts;
and/or
- make comparisons to other practices, suggest uniqueness or superiority;
and/or
- are likely to create expectations of favourable results or appeal to the public's fears.

The following is a list of adjectives that have **not** been approved by the Executive Committee:

best	mercury-free
carefree	painless
complete	personalized
comprehensive	preventive
convenient	quality
gentle	

3. Under the Regulation, you may use a practice name that is “reasonably referable to and describes the location of the practice” without any approval from the College. Those practice names must be “reasonable” in identifying the location of the dental office.

A practice name that refers to a large area, including reference to a municipality such as Toronto Dental Office, is not considered to reasonably identify the location and indeed may be considered to be misleading to the public. If the practice name describes a geographic area but does not assist the public in identifying the specific location of the dental office, the name would require the approval of the College's Executive Committee. Historically the Committee has not been forthcoming.

Section 2

40. Using a name other than the member's name as set out in the register or the practice name, in the course of providing or offering to provide dental services.

41. Using a designation other than "dentist", "dental surgeon", a prescribed specialty designation, the member's earned university degrees or earned equivalents for which the Council or the Executive Committee thereof has given its prior written approval, "dental centre", "dental clinic" or "and associates" in the course of providing or offering to provide dental services.

42. Where the principal member uses the designation "dental centre", "dental clinic" or "and associates", failing to notify the College in writing of the names and certificate numbers of all the members who practise at the location to which the designation applies and the names of all of such members who are principal members, or failing to notify the College in writing of any change in members or principal members within thirty days of the change.

Section 7

If the member practises under a practice name, he or she shall:

- (a) notify the College in writing of the name of every member who engages in practice under the practice name and whether as a principal member or an associated member;
- (b) use a practice name that is reasonably referable to and describes the location of the practice or that has been approved by the Executive Committee; and
- (c) notify the College in writing of any change in the members who practise under the practice name within thirty days of the change.



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