

Media Guidelines for Healthcare Practitioners



Reading time:
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Health practitioners including MIPS members have provided healthcare advice through television, radio and various other forms of media. MIPS occasionally receives enquiries from members who wish to participate in such activities about their cover.

Despite the surge in use of social media in addition to traditional forms of media, there is no change in professional obligations. Healthcare advice must still be provided with the same degree of professional diligence, care and caution.

Requirements of the Medical or Dental Board

The Boards provide guidance in their respective codes of conduct about professional behaviour in general media. Specific guidance is provided in relation to social media .

Professional standards must be maintained and healthcare practitioners must be aware of the consequences of their professional advice and actions. The principles are articulated by AHPRA in the codes of conduct for both medical and dental practitioners. Important expectations include compliance with advertising, privacy and confidentiality requirements and presenting information in an unbiased, evidence informed context while at all times avoiding making unsubstantiated claims. It is also important to consider that any comment, statement or other material that is provided may end up and remain in the public domain.

MIPS members intending to promulgate their views in the media, should be familiar with these codes and the guide to online professionalism published by the AMA and medical students associations of Australia and New Zealand.

MIPS' position

Providing general advice of a healthcare nature (rather than specific healthcare advice to a patient) via the many forms of media is generally not the provision of healthcare as defined at 14.4 in the MIPS Indemnity Insurance Policy.

However in the event of a non healthcare/medical indemnity complaint, investigation or claim arising from media or similar non healthcare/non medical indemnity like activity, members may approach MIPS for assistance under MIPS Protections, an additional benefit of MIPS membership, where the matter arises out of a member's professional activities.

MIPS recommends you:

- should have the appropriate recognised qualifications, training and experience for the health conditions, services and treatments on which you comment
- maintain an appropriate membership category
- provide only accurate current evidence based information
- familiarise yourself with Board codes and guidelines
- advise your audience that anyone with a health concern should consult a GP as soon as possible
- provide an appropriate disclaimer.

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