VISUAL GUIDE · FOR DOCTORS, CLINICS & HOSPITALS

NMC's New Advertising & Social Media Rules — Explained Visually

Every rule from the NMC public notice dated 06 Oct 2026, turned into flowcharts and checklists. Each point shows the **real text from the notice** — tap it to jump to that exact page of the original, included in full at the end.

06.10.2026	45	1 tap
Notice date · in force immediately	real clauses quoted	from any quote to the original page

Source: National Medical Commission, Ethics & Medical Registration Board · No. R-13014/01/2024-Ethics

Growth by CC
Information guide · not legal advice

START HERE

How to read this guide

Yellow strip = real NMC text. A word-for-word crop of the official notice. Tap it to open that page of the original (at the end of this PDF), where the same lines are highlighted.

Purple box = what it means for you. Our plain-language reading. If in doubt, the original text always wins.

Contents (tap any line)

01 The whole notice on one page →
02 Flowchart: Is my post an “advertisement”? →
03 Flowchart: 7-check test before you post →
04 The 12 big DON'Ts →
05 Testimonials & reviews →
06 Patient privacy & consent (flowchart) →
07 Banned words & claims →
08 Offers, commissions & agency payments →
09 AI content (flowchart) →
10 Agencies, influencers & platforms →
11 What you CAN post →
12 Hospitals & your own photo →
13 Penalty ladder →
14 What happens if a complaint is filed (flowchart) →
15 Printable checklist + rewrite examples →
16 Appendix: the original notice, all 13 pages →

📄 REAL NMC TEXT · Notice header — Notice p.1 ↗

No.: R-13014/01/2024-Ethics Dated: 06/10/2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: Guidelines on Ethical Advertising and Public Communication by Hospitals/Medical Institutions and Registered Medical Practitioners.

📄 REAL NMC TEXT · Commencement — Notice p.1 ↗

The Guidelines shall come into force with immediate effect.

01 · THE BIG PICTURE

The whole notice on one page

👥 Who it covers

Every Registered Medical Practitioner (RMP), hospitals & clinics, healthcare platforms, and anyone posting for them — agencies, influencers.

📣 What is an "ad"

Any post that promotes your services, skills, reputation or facilities, or solicits patients — in any medium.

⛔ What's banned

Testimonials, before-after, "best/No.1/guaranteed", offers & freebies, fake engagement, AI promo campaigns, per-patient commissions.

✅ What's allowed

Health education, public talks, factual announcements (clinic opening, address, fees), journal case studies, govt campaigns.

NMC Ethical Advertising Guidelines

06.10.2026 · immediate effect

🔒 Patient privacy

No identifiable patient data. Consent does not make a testimonial or before-after OK.

🤖 AI

No AI promotional campaigns. Allowed AI content must say it's AI-generated.

⚖️ Penalties

Warning → penalty → suspension → removal from register for up to 3 years.

🧑‍⚖️ Due process

Show-cause notice first. Appeal to NMC within 60 days, then a second appeal.

Every post must show (Explanation III)

Name	Qualifications	Registration status	SMR / NMR Reg. No.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 3.2 · Explanation III** — Notice p.4 ↗

Explanation III- RMP while publishing any Electronic media posts should transparently disclose their name, qualifications, registration status and SMR/NMR Registration number.

02 · FLOWCHART

Is my post an "advertisement"?

Does the post **promote** your services, skills, qualifications, achievements, reputation or facilities — or **solicit patients**, directly or indirectly?

YES

📣 It is an **ADVERTISEMENT**

Instagram, Reels, WhatsApp, YouTube, podcasts, influencer posts, Google/search ads, sponsored posts, AI content — all included

Must follow every rule → run the **7-check test**

NO

Is it general information for the public, **without promotion** and **without commercial intent**?

YES

✅ Not treated as an advertisement (Explanation I)

Still show your name, qualification & Reg. No.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 3.2** — **Notice p.4 ↗**

For the purposes of these Guidelines, digital, social-media, sponsored, targeted, influencer-led, search-engine, platform-based, audio-visual, AI-generated or AI-assisted promotional communications shall be treated as advertising where their content or manner of dissemination has a promotional character.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 3.2 · Explanation I** — **Notice p.4 ↗**

Explanation I - The discourse of information in the normal course of discharge of information to the public at large, without same being promotional and without any intent for commercial benefit shall be exempted from the above definition of "Advertisement".

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 3.5 · Medium of advertisement** — **Notice p.5 ↗**

3.5 **"Medium of advertisement"** means and includes but is not limited to print media, Television, Radio, Social media platforms, websites and blogs, messaging platforms (WhatsApp, Telegrams, Facebook etc.),Podcasts, Influencer marketing, Digital marketing campaigns, sponsored posts, artificial intelligence generated promotion, public interviews, news articles intended for promotion, online healthcare platforms, any audio-visual or digital communication by whatsoever name called.

03 · FLOWCHART

The 7-check test before you post

Run every Reel, post, story, WhatsApp forward and ad through these seven checks, top to bottom. A red answer means stop and fix before posting.

1	Does the post show your **name, qualification & SMR/NMR Reg. No.**?	✅ **YES → next**	❌ **NO → Add them** Exp. III ↗
2	Any **patient** testimonial, review, story, before-after, face or name?	✅ **NO → next**	❌ **YES → Remove** Exp. V, 6.2, 8.1(v) ↗
3	Any "**best**", "No.1", "guaranteed", "100%", "painless", "miracle" type claim?	✅ **NO → next**	❌ **YES → Delete claim** 8.1(iii), (ix) ↗
4	Any **discount**, offer, coupon, cashback, free camp or freebie?	✅ **NO → next**	❌ **YES → Remove offer** 8.1(x) ↗
5	Does it use **fear** or push **unnecessary tests/procedures**?	✅ **NO → next**	❌ **YES → Rewrite** 8.1(i), (vi) ↗
6	Made with **AI**? Is it a promo campaign, or fakes a person?	✅ **NO → next**	❌ **YES → Stop / label** 7.2 ↗
7	Posted by an **agency/influencer**? Would it pass if *you* posted it?	✅ **NO → next**	❌ **YES → Fix — you're liable** 4.4, 8.1(xi) ↗

✅ Passed all 7? **Post it.** Keep a copy of the post and any consent records.

04 · OVERVIEW

The 12 big DON'Ts

Straight from Clause 8.1 and 7.2. Tap any tile to see the original page.

😨 ✕
Fear-based marketing, pushing unnecessary tests or procedures
8.1(i)

📢 ✕
Soliciting patients or self-promotion, incl. through third parties
8.1(ii)

🏆 ✕
"Best", "No.1", "Guaranteed cure", "100% success", "Painless"
8.1(iii), (ix)

💊 ✕
Endorsing any drug, device or health product — paid or not
8.1(iv)

📸 ✕
Before-after photos, success stories, celebrity patients
8.1(v)

✨ ✕
Unrealistic promises, hidden risks, unproven or secret remedies
8.1(vi)

🤝 ✕
Commissions, referral fees, lead-generation fees
8.1(vii)

📈 ✕
Paying agencies/influencers per patient brought in
8.1(viii)

🏷️ ✕
Discounts, limited offers, contests, coupons, cashback, free procedures
8.1(x)

🎤 ✕
Celebrity, influencer, patient or staff testimonials
8.1(xi), Exp. V

🤖 ✕
Fake followers, likes, reviews, comments; gaming search rankings
8.1(xii)

🧠 ✕
AI-generated promotional campaigns
7.2

💡 **What it means for you**

- These apply on **every** platform — Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Google, Practo-type listings, print and hoardings.
- Hoardings/billboards may only carry factual info like infrastructure and facilities (Clause 5.2).
- Doing it through someone else doesn't help — you're still responsible (Clause 4.4).

05 · DEEP DIVE

Testimonials & reviews

🧑 **Patient**
"Doctor ne meri life badal di!"



📱 **Your post / Reel / story**

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 3.2 · Explanation V** — **Notice p.4 ↗**

Explanation V- No RMP or hospital/medical institution shall solicit, purchase, procure, manipulate or cause to be published fake, paid or misleading patient reviews, ratings, testimonials, endorsements or recommendations for the promotion of medical services. An RMP shall not request or share patient testimonials, recommendations, endorsements or reviews for professional promotion on social media.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 8.1(xi)** — **Notice p.9 ↗**

xi. No RMP shall use or permit any celebrity, influencer, patient, employee or third party to promote professional services through prohibited testimonials, endorsements or recommendations. Any material commercial relationship in lawful public-health or informational communication shall be transparently disclosed in accordance with applicable law. No RMP or hospital/medical institution shall use a third party as an intermediary to do indirectly what the RMP or institution is prohibited from doing directly.

💡 What it means for you

- Don't **ask** patients for testimonials or reviews to promote yourself, and don't **share/repost** them on social media.
- Never buy, procure or edit reviews or ratings — no fake or paid reviews.
- Celebrities, influencers, staff or patients can't promote you with testimonials either.
- Any genuine commercial tie-up in health-awareness content must be disclosed.

06 · FLOWCHART

Using any patient photo, video, case or story?

Is it for **promotion**? (testimonial, success story, before-after, endorsement, "look what I achieved")

YES ↓

❌ **Not allowed — even with written consent**
Clause 6.2 · 8.1(v)

NO — strictly scientific / educational ↓

Is consent **specific, informed, voluntary, documented & verifiable**? (6.3)

YES ↓

Remove identity: crop/blur/black-out **name, face, birthmarks**, anything identifying (6.4, 7.4)

↓

✅ OK to use for scientific / educational purposes

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 6.2** — Notice p.6 ↗

6.2 Patient consent shall not, by itself, make permissible any testimonial, endorsement, promotional patient story, before-and-after depiction, success claim or other advertising practice that is otherwise prohibited under these Guidelines or applicable law.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 6.4** — Notice p.6 ↗

6.4 Even where disclosure is lawfully permitted, reasonable safeguards shall be adopted by the hospital/medical institution and RMP shall be duty bound to prevent unnecessary disclosure of names or to crop, blur, black out, birth marks/ identification marks, or other information through which the patient may be identified.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 8.1(v)** — Notice p.8 ↗

v. Shall not publish cases for promotional purposes, advertise surgical results, display "before and after" photographs, publicize celebrity patients, promote personal success stories unless published strictly for scientific or educational purposes with anonymized patient consent.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 7.4** — Notice p.7 ↗

7.4 RMP/ Clinical establishment shall not share any patient data, such as names, faces, anomalies, etc., which can be identified publicly.

07 · DEEP DIVE

Banned words & claims

~~Guaranteed cure~~ ~~Best doctor~~ ~~No.1 Specialist~~ ~~100% success~~ ~~Painless treatment~~ ~~Miracle treatment~~ ~~Exclusive cure~~ ~~Leading~~ ~~Most trusted~~ ~~Top~~ ~~Unmatched~~ ~~Number one~~

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 8.1(iii)** — **Notice p.8** ↗

iii. Shall not advertise either personal achievements or professional success rates or number of patients treated with illustrative assertions such as "Guaranteed cures", "Best doctors", "No.1 Specialist", "100% success", "painless treatment", "Miracle treatment", "Exclusive cure" or any other unverifiable or exaggerated claims by whatsoever name called.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 8.1(ix) + proviso** — **Notice p.9** ↗

ix. No RMP or hospital/medical institution shall make comparative claims such as "best", "No.1", "leading", "most trusted", "top", "number one", "unmatched" or similar superiority claims unless the claim is objectively verifiable, based on a transparent and independently ascertainable methodology and is otherwise permissible under applicable law.

Provided, Any ranking or award relied upon in advertising shall be capable of independent verification, and material conditions, methodology and relevant date, details of award giving organization or firm shall be disclosed where necessary to avoid misleading the public.

Want to mention a ranking or award?

↓

Only if **independently verifiable** — and disclose the methodology, date and the awarding organisation

💡 What it means for you

- Remove superlatives and outcome promises from bios, captions, thumbnails and clinic boards.
- Don't advertise success rates or "number of patients treated".
- Never hide risks or promote unproven or secret remedies (Clause 8.1(vi)).

Offers, commissions & agency payments

🏷️ "Diwali offer ₹999"
🎁 Free camp / free procedure
🎟️ Coupons, cashback, contests
👥 Referral benefits
8.1(x)

💸 Commission / referral fee / lead fee for patients, specimens or materials
8.1(vii)

📈 Agency or influencer paid **per patient** they bring in
8.1(viii)

✅ Fees, charges & packages stated **factually**, transparently, not misleading
8.1(x) · 8.2(ii)(g)

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 8.1(x)** — Notice p.9 ↗

x. No RMP or hospital/medical institution shall use discounts, limited-period offers, contests, coupons, gifts, cashbacks, referral benefits, free procedures or similar inducements in a manner that is likely to encourage unnecessary medical consultation, diagnostic investigation or treatment or otherwise amounts to solicitation of patients.

Any lawful disclosure of charges, packages or fees shall be factual, transparent and not misleading.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 8.1(vii)** — Notice p.8 ↗

vii. No RMP shall, directly or indirectly, offer, pay, solicit, receive or participate in any commission, rebate, bonus, gift, gratuity, referral fee, lead-generation fee or other consideration in relation to the promotion or advertisement of medical services, where such consideration is connected with the referral, recommendation or procurement of patients, specimens or materials for diagnosis, treatment, surgery or other medical services.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 8.1(viii)** — Notice p.8 ↗

viii. The engagement of advertising agencies, digital marketing agencies, influencers or online platforms shall not be structured in a manner that results in payment or consideration being linked to the procurement or referral of individual patients.

09 · FLOWCHART

Using AI to make content?

Is it an AI-generated **promotional campaign** for commercial interest?

YES ↓

❌ Prohibited (7.2)

NO ↓

Does it mislead on diagnosis, treatment, outcomes, qualifications or patient experiences?

NO ↓

Does it fake or alter a patient's/doctor's image, voice or testimonial?

NO ↓

Patient data used as AI input? → must follow privacy & data-protection law (7.2(d), 7.6)

↓

✅ Allowed — but **label it "AI-generated"** (7.2, 7.2(c))

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 7.2** **Notice p.7 ↗**

7.2 AI Generated promotional campaign for furtherance of commercial interest is prohibited.Any AI generated promotional contentconforming to the provisions of these guidelines, the Regulations, and applicable Clinical Establishment Act and rules framed thereunder/ any other State Act as applicable, shall compulsorily carry the source mark, explicitly stating that the origin of the content is AI.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 7.2(b)** **Notice p.7 ↗**

b) AI shall not be used to create or manipulate a patient's image, testimonial, voice or clinical outcome, or to create a synthetic endorsement or representation purporting to be that of an actual patient, RMP or other person.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 7.2(c)** **Notice p.7 ↗**

c) Where AI-generated or materially AI-altered content is used in a manner in which its artificial nature may reasonably be material to the audience's understanding of the communication, appropriate disclosure shall be made.

10 · DEEP DIVE

Agencies, influencers & platforms

👩‍⚕️ **YOU**
(RMP / hospital)

authorises · commissions · sponsors · knowingly permits →

🏢 **Agency** · 🎤 **Influencer** · 🌐 **Platform**

⚖️ Responsibility for the content **stays with you** · You can't do indirectly what you can't do directly

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 4.4** — **Notice p.5** ↗

4.4 The fact that an advertisement or promotional communication is published through a digital platform, third party, advertising agency, influencer or other intermediary shall not, by itself, absolve an RMP or medical institution from responsibility for content which it has authorized, commissioned, sponsored, adopted or knowingly permitted. The disciplinary or statutory consequences shall, however, be determined by the competent authority under the applicable law.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 8.1(xii)** — **Notice p.9** ↗

xii. No RMP or hospital/medical institution shall procure, manipulate or cause any third party to procure or manipulate fake followers, likes, reviews, ratings, testimonials, comments, views or other digital engagement, or manipulate search rankings, visibility or algorithms to create a misleading impression of professional standing.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 9.4 · Platforms** — **Notice p.11** ↗

9.4 All healthcare platforms hosting RMP shall ensure compliance with NMC ethical advertising norms, prohibition of paid ranking of doctors, maintain transparency in listing practices.

💡 What it means for you

- Brief your agency on these rules in writing and approve every post.
- No buying followers, likes, views, reviews or rankings — by you or your agency.
- Doctor-listing platforms can't sell paid rankings of doctors.

What you CAN post

🎓 **Health awareness, public-health campaigns, educational content**
5.1

🎙️ **Lectures & talks on TV/radio/online in your own name & designation**
8.2(iii)

📰 **Case studies published in reputed medical journals**
8.2(i)

📄 **Health-education pamphlets for patients at your clinic**
8.2(iv)

🇮🇳 **Greetings on national / medical days (no promotion)**
8.2(v)

🏛️ **Government health scheme campaigns (exempt)**
7.3 Expl.

Formal announcements you may make (factual, non-promotional)

- Starting practice
- Change of practice type
- Change of address
- Temporary absence
- Resuming practice
- Succeeding a practice
- Consultation fees

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 5.1** — Notice p.6 ↗

5.1 Medical Practitioners may participate in health awareness programmers, public health campaigns, academic discussions, educational content, provided that such activities do not promote personal practice, do not solicit patients and are not monetized through promotional marketing.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 9.3** — Notice p.11 ↗

9.3 RMP can issue a formal announcement which are factual, non-promotional and limited in scope regarding starting of practice, change of address, change of practice type, temporary absence, resumption of practice, public declaration of consultation fees.

💡 What it means for you

- Education must not promote your personal practice, solicit patients, or be monetised through promotional marketing.
- Put your name, qualification and Reg. No. on every post.

Hospitals may share facts — not hype

✅ Name, location, contact, departments, facilities, equipment, services, emergency services, accreditation, charges · Website doctor directory (names, qualifications, specialties, registration, availability)

❌ Soliciting patients, inducements, superiority claims, guaranteed outcomes, promotional portrayal of an individual doctor · Repeating facts so often they become promotion

📄 REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 9.1 — Notice p.10 ↗

9.1 Clinical Establishments may advertise only factual information, where it is limited to objective and verifiable particulars concerning the establishment,

including the name of the establishment, contact details, departments functioning, diagnostic facilities, emergency services, accreditation status, other facilities offered and applicable fees. A hospital website containing a directory of its doctors, containing the names, recognised qualifications, specialties, registration details and availability of its doctors, that serves a patient-information function; shall be regarded materially distinct from a paid or promotional advertisement or inducement.

Your own photo

📄 REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 9.2 — Notice p.11 ↗

9.2 Use of the photograph/image of an RMP shall not be permitted; where such use constitutes self-advertisement, solicitation or promotional publicity. In particular, use of self-photograph or similar publicity material on the letterhead or signboard of a consulting room or clinical establishment shall be governed by Regulations 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 of the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002, and regarded as unethical conduct.

💡 What it means for you

- Using your photo for self-advertisement, solicitation or promotional publicity is not permitted — including on letterheads and clinic signboards.
- Educational videos in your own name are covered under Clauses 5.1 and 8.2(iii), but avoid your photo in promotional posts (offers, “book now”, clinic ads).
- Hospitals are also governed by their state Clinical Establishment Act, which prevails if there's a conflict (Clause 4.3).

13 · CONSEQUENCES

The penalty ladder

Graded action that **may** be taken by your State Medical Council (Clause 10.1).

1st Warning + mandatory ethics training

2nd Censure + monetary penalty

3rd Suspension of registration: 3–6 months

Serious Misleading cure claims, inducements, digital mass solicitation → suspension 6–12 months

Repeated Removal from the medical register for 1–3 years

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 10.1** **Notice p.11 ↗**

10.1 In case of violation of the above guidelines, actions will be taken by the concerned SMC against the erring RMP in accordance with the provisions ofthe NMC Act and Regulations made thereunder.The following graded action **may be contemplated** by the SMC concerned;

i. **First Violation**: Warning and mandatory ethics training.
ii. **Second Violation:** Censure and monetary penalty.
iii. **Third Violation:** Suspension of registration (3-6 months).
iv. **Serious Violation** (Misleading cure claims, inducement for patients, digital mass solicitation, etc.) Suspension of 6-12 months.
v. **Repeated Violations:** Removal from medical register for 1-3 years.

💡 **What it means for you**

- Hospitals are dealt with under the applicable Clinical Establishment Act; doctors who authorised the content can still be examined separately (Clause 11.5).
- Violations may count as professional misconduct under the NMC Act, 2019.

14 · FLOWCHART

If a complaint is filed against you

⚠️ Alleged violation reported to your State Medical Council (SMC)

↓

📨 **Show-cause notice** — you get a chance to explain (10.2)

↓

📝 SMC passes a **reasoned order**: the violation, your arguments and why accepted/rejected, reasons for the penalty (10.3)

Not satisfied?

↓

⚖️ **First appeal** to EMRB, NMC within **60 days** (11.1)

Still not satisfied?

↓

⚖️ **Second appeal** within **60 days** of the first-appeal decision (11.4, Sec 30(4) NMC Act)

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 10.2** — **Notice p.12 ↗**

10.2 The penalties shall be imposed only after issuing a show-cause notice to the defaulting RMP and providing an opportunity to explain or clarify the alleged violation, in accordance with the applicable laws.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 11.1** — **Notice p.12 ↗**

11.1 Any RMP aggrieved by the findings or decision of the SMC may prefer an appeal before the Appellate Authority i.e, EMRB,NMC, within 60 days under Section 30 (3) of NMC Act, 2019.

📄 **REAL NMC TEXT · Clause 11.4** — **Notice p.12 ↗**

11.4 The decision on the first appeal may be contested by the RMP through second appeal, in accordance with Section 30 (4), NMC Act, 2019, within sixty days of communication of such decision.

15 · KEEP THIS HANDY

Printable checklist

- ☐ Name, qualification, Reg. No. on every post & bio
- ☐ No patient testimonials, reviews, stories or reposts
- ☐ No before-after or celebrity patients
- ☐ No “best / No.1 / guaranteed / painless / 100%”
- ☐ No offers, coupons, free camps, cashback
- ☐ No fear-based or unnecessary-test messaging
- ☐ No product / drug / device endorsements
- ☐ No fake followers, likes, reviews or SEO manipulation
- ☐ No AI promo campaigns; AI content labelled
- ☐ Patients fully anonymised; consent documented
- ☐ Agency briefed in writing; you approve every post
- ☐ No per-patient payments to agencies or influencers

Rewrite it like this

Before (risky)	After (compliant)
❌ “Pune's No.1 IVF specialist — 95% success!”	✅ “Dr. A. Sharma, MS (OBG), Reg. No. MMC-XXXX · What is IVF? A 60-second explainer”
❌ “Diwali offer: full body check-up ₹999 only!”	✅ “Clinic open 10am–2pm on Diwali. Consultation fee ₹800.”
❌ “Painless laser, guaranteed results”	✅ “How laser treatment works, its risks and recovery time”
❌ Patient video: “Doctor saab ne meri life badal di”	✅ An educational video on the condition — no patient identity
❌ AI avatar ad promoting your clinic	✅ AI-assisted infographic on a health topic, labelled “AI-generated”

Growth by CC — practical guides for growing ethically online. Questions? DM me on Instagram.

This is an information guide based on the NMC notice dated 06.10.2026, not legal advice. Where this guide and the notice differ, the notice prevails. NMC may issue clarifications (Clause 12).

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राष्ट्रीय आयुर्विज्ञान आयोग
नैतिकता और चिकित्सा पंजीकरण बोर्ड
National Medical Commission
Ethics & Medical Registration Board

No.: R-13014/01/2024-Ethics **Dated: 06/10/2026**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: Guidelines on Ethical Advertising and Public Communication by Hospitals/Medical Institutions and Registered Medical Practitioners.

In view of the Writ Petition (Civil) No.1160/2023 filed in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India and provisions of Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002; the **subject guidelines** have been framed with the following objectives:

- Preserve dignity of the medical profession.
- Prevent commercialization of health care.
- Protect patient interest and prevent misleading medical claims.
- Ensure healthcare communication remains informational, ethical and evidence-based.
- Align hospital advertising practices with professional standards applicable to Registered Medical Practitioners.
- Promote transparency while discouraging commercialization of medical care, regulate digital healthcare promotion.
- Ensure ethical parity across all systems of medicine etc.

2. Accordingly, the National Medical Commission (NMC) hereby informs all **Registered Medical Practitioners and other concerned stakeholders,** to ensure compliance with the provisions of the annexed Guidelines.

The Guidelines shall come into force with immediate effect.

Encl.: As above

Digitally signed by
Dr.Raghav Langer
Date: 06-10-2026
19:22:33

(Dr. Raghav Langer)
Secretary, National Medical Commission

Copy to :

(i) ACS/Pr. Secretary/Secretary (Health & Medical Education Department) of all States/UTs

(ii) DG/Director, DME of all States/UTs

(ii) Registrars of all State Medical Councils (SMCs)

(iv) Dean/Principal of all Medical Colleges/ Institutions

(v) Director EMRB, NMC

Copy for kind information to :

(i) PSO to the Secretary, Department of Health & Family Welfare, MoHFW, Kartavya Bhawan-I, New Delhi.

(ii) PPS to the Chairman, National Medical Commission, Dwarka, New Delhi.

(iii) PPS to President MARB/UGMEB/PGMEB/EMRB.

Guidelines on Ethical Advertising and Public Communication by hospitals/medical institutions and Registered Medical Practitioners

1. Short Title and Commencement

1.1 These Guidelines may be called the "Guidelines on Ethical Advertising and Public Communication by hospitals/medical institutions and Registered Medical Practitioners (hereinafter referred to as Guidelines)

1.2 They shall come into force on the date of their publication by the National Medical Commission.

2. Preamble and Objectives:

2.1 These Guidelines are framed to regulate advertisements and digital communications relating to medical practice and healthcare services in an ethical, truthful, transparent and responsible manner. They aim to protect patients and the public from misleading or unsubstantiated claims, safeguard patient privacy and autonomy, and uphold the dignity and integrity of the medical profession.

a) provide a contemporary framework for ethical, truthful, transparent and responsible regulation of advertisements and promotional communications relating to medical practice and healthcare services;

b) safeguard patients, the public and public health by preventing false, misleading, exaggerated, deceptive or unsubstantiated medical claims and ensuring that information disseminated by Registered Medical Practitioners (RMPs) and medical institutions is factual, accurate, transparent and capable of verification;

c) prevent direct or indirect solicitation of patients and commercial promotion that may induce unnecessary investigations, treatments or medical procedures;

d) regulate advertisements and promotional communications disseminated through digital and emerging technologies;

e) uphold patient autonomy and privacy and maintain the dignity, integrity and ethical standards of the medical profession; and

f) provide an operational framework consistent with the National Medical Commission Act, 2019, the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002, as applicable, and other applicable laws, rules and regulations, without altering, overriding or derogating from any existing statutory or regulatory requirement.

2.2 Nothing contained in these Guidelines shall be construed as permitting any act which is prohibited under the applicable law or the aforesaid Regulations.

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

3. Definitions

3.1 **"Act"** means the National Medical Commission Act, 2019 (Section 30 of 2019).

3.2 **"Advertisement"** mean any form of communication, promotion, publicity, announcement, representation or dissemination of information in any medium, which directly or indirectly solicits, promotes or is intended to promote the professional services, reputation, skills, qualifications, achievements, facilities or commercial healthcare services of an RMP or hospital/medical institution.

For the purposes of these Guidelines, digital, social-media, sponsored, targeted, influencer-led, search-engine, platform-based, audio-visual, AI-generated or AI-assisted promotional communications shall be treated as advertising where their content or manner of dissemination has a promotional character.

Explanation I - The discourse of information in the normal course of discharge of information to the public at large, without same being promotional and without any intent for commercial benefit shall be exempted from the above definition of "Advertisement".

Explanation II- Information regarding availability or installation of equipment, technology, diagnostic facilities or services may be disseminated as factual information, provided that such communication does not contain claims of superiority, guaranteed accuracy, guaranteed outcomes, comparative claims or other misleading or unverifiable representations.

Explanation III- RMP while publishing any Electronic media posts should transparently disclose their name, qualifications, registration status and SMR/NMR Registration number.

Explanation IV- Clinical Establishments while publishing any Electronic media posts should transparently disclose the names of the RMP with qualifications, registration status and SMR/NMR Registration number.

Explanation V- No RMP or hospital/medical institution shall solicit, purchase, procure, manipulate or cause to be published fake, paid or misleading patient reviews, ratings, testimonials, endorsements or recommendations for the promotion of medical services. An RMP shall not request or share patient testimonials, recommendations, endorsements or reviews for professional promotion on social media.

3 . 3 **"Artificial Intelligence"** or **"AI"** means a self-learning automated process, program, machine or computer built for doing task which usually require human brain.

3.4 **"Hospital/Medical Institution"** means a clinical establishment providing facilities and services for the diagnosis, treatment or care of illness, injury, deformity, abnormality or pregnancy, where patients may be admitted

and treated as in-patients or treated as out-patients, in any recognised system of medicine, and includes an institution covered under Section 2(c)(i) of the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010/ any other State Act as applicable.

3.5 **"Medium of advertisement"** means and includes but is not limited to print media, Television, Radio, Social media platforms, websites and blogs, messaging platforms (WhatsApp, Telegrams, Facebook etc.),Podcasts, Influencer marketing, Digital marketing campaigns, sponsored posts, artificial intelligence generated promotion, public interviews, news articles intended for promotion, online healthcare platforms, any audio-visual or digital communication by whatsoever name called.

3.6 **"Social Media"** shall mean and include all forms of publications and sharing through internet-based websites, apps, etc. by whatsoever name called, which allows users to create, share and join online communities, participate in social networking, etc.

3.7 **"Registered Medical Practitioners"** or **"RMP(s)"** shall mean and include the Medical Practitioners registered under the NMC Act and whose names are either entered in the National Register under section 31 of the NMC Act or in the concerned State Medical Register.

4. Scope & Applicability

4.1 These Guidelines shall apply to the professional conduct of the RMPs in relation to advertising, publicity, digital communication and promotional activities and to address the gap created due to advent of electronic media. These Guidelines are sought to be more comprehensive, specific and aligned to the needs of the present-day society.

4.2 In relation to RMPs, these Guidelines shall be read with the IMC (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002, as amended from time to time, and the NMC Act, 2019. In case of any irreconcilable conflict, the applicable statutory provisions and operative regulations shall prevail.

4.3 For Hospitals/ Medical Institutions, these guidelines shall be read in conjunction with the applicable Clinical Establishment Act or Rules framed thereunder/ any other State Act as applicable and in case of any irreconcilable conflict between the two, the provisions of theapplicable Clinical EstablishmentAct or Rules framed thereunder/ any other State Act as applicable shall override the provisions of these Guidelines.

4.4 The fact that an advertisement or promotional communication is published through a digital platform, third party, advertising agency, influencer or other intermediary shall not, by itself, absolve an RMP or medical institution from responsibility for content which it has authorized, commissioned, sponsored, adopted or knowingly permitted. The disciplinary or statutory consequences shall, however, be determined by the competent authority under the applicable law.

5. Public Awareness: Public health education

5.1 Medical Practitioners may participate in health awareness programmers, public health campaigns, academic discussions, educational content, provided that such activities do not promote personal practice, do not solicit patients and are not monetized through promotional marketing.

5.2 Hoardings/Billboards in public space that are let out by concerned municipal or other authorities like state transport authority, railways, airports etc., may be used by hospitals/medical institutions and RMPs only for dissemination of factual information in the nature of infrastructure, facilities etc. Unverified or unverifiable claims shall be construed as for furtherance of commercial gains, and are prohibited.

6. Patient Privacy and Consent

6.1 Patient information, photographs, videos, medical records, clinical images, treatment details, testimonials or other identifiable information shall not be used for advertising purposes except where such use is permitted by applicable law and the necessary consent and other safeguards have been duly complied with.

6.2 Patient consent shall not, by itself, make permissible any testimonial, endorsement, promotional patient story, before-and-after depiction, success claim or other advertising practice that is otherwise prohibited under these Guidelines or applicable law.

6.3 Where consent is legally required, it shall be specific, informed, voluntary, documented and capable of verification, and shall comply with applicable privacy and data-protection law. The form and mode of recording consent shall be determined in accordance with the applicable law and the nature and purpose of the proposed use.

6.4 Even where disclosure is lawfully permitted, reasonable safeguards shall be adopted by the hospital/medical institution and RMP shall be duty bound to prevent unnecessary disclosure of names or to crop, blur, black out, birth marks/ identification marks, or other information through which the patient may be identified.

CHAPTER-II

PROHIBITION AND EXEMPTION

7. Prohibited Advertising Practices for RMP / Clinical Establishments

7.1 RMP/ Clinical Establishments should use the social media in the most responsible manner and with the sole intention to balance public dissemination of information with utmost enforcement of patient integrity along with stringent adherence to professional ethics.

7.2 AI Generated promotional campaign for furtherance of commercial interest is prohibited.Any AI generated promotional contentconforming to the provisions of these guidelines, the Regulations, and applicable Clinical Establishment Act and rules framed thereunder/ any other State Act as applicable, shall compulsorily carry the source mark, explicitly stating that the origin of the content is AI.

a) AI-generated or AI-assisted content shall not be used by an RMP or hospital/medical institution to create or disseminate misleading, deceptive or unverifiable representations concerning diagnosis, treatment, clinical outcomes, professional qualifications, patient experiences or healthcare services.

b) AI shall not be used to create or manipulate a patient's image, testimonial, voice or clinical outcome, or to create a synthetic endorsement or representation purporting to be that of an actual patient, RMP or other person.

c) Where AI-generated or materially AI-altered content is used in a manner in which its artificial nature may reasonably be material to the audience's understanding of the communication, appropriate disclosure shall be made.

d) Any use of patient information as input for an AI system shall comply with applicable privacy, confidentiality, data-protection and professional-ethics requirements.

7.3 The prohibited practices relating to advertising, publicity, solicitation, endorsements, testimonials, patient images, misleading claims and digital manipulation shall be governed by Chapter III of these Guidelines. RMPs and clinical establishments shall also comply with the specific requirements relating to patient privacy, digital communication and AI contained in pre-paras of this Chapter.

Explanation - All campaigns on programmes/schemes of Government of India and the state Governments, which arein larger public interest, shall be exempted from these guidelines.

7.4 RMP/ Clinical establishment shall not share any patient data, such as names, faces, anomalies, etc., which can be identified publicly.

7.5 Nothing in these Guidelines shall be construed as permitting the live broadcast or commercial dissemination of surgical or clinical procedures in a manner inconsistent with the applicable NMC guidelines, directions or advisories relating to live surgery broadcasts.

Any live surgery broadcast shall comply with the applicable NMC framework governing patient safety, consent, privacy, educational purpose, sponsorship, commercialization and professional conduct.

7.6 Advertisement under these Guidelines involving processing, publication, storage, disclosure or other use of digital personal data shall comply with the provision of Information Technology Act, 2000; Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 and Rules made thereunder in 2025, to

the extent applicable and in force from time to time.

CHAPTER III

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ETHICAL COMMUNICATION STANDARDS

8.1 **Advertising Restrictions and Permitted Communications for RMPs.**

i. Shall not engage in advertisement/ activities intended to create unnecessary demand for medical procedures, promote unnecessary diagnostics and promote fear-based marketing.
ii. Shall not solicit patients directly or indirectly, promote his/her professional services through self-promotion, engage any third party for marketing medical services, permit the use of their name, image, voice, testimonial or endorsement for promotion of services or any products, participate in promotional campaigns giving an impression of commercialization of medical practice.
iii. Shall not advertise either personal achievements or professional success rates or number of patients treated with illustrative assertions such as "Guaranteed cures", "Best doctors", "No.1 Specialist", "100% success", "painless treatment", "Miracle treatment", "Exclusive cure" or any other unverifiable or exaggerated claims by whatsoever name called.
iv. An RMP shall not give, directly or indirectly, any approval, recommendation, endorsement, certificate, report or statement concerning any drug, medicine, remedy, therapeutic article, apparatus, appliance, medical device, diagnostic product, health product or commercial product for use in advertising or publicity in connection with his/her name, signature, photograph, voice or professional status, whether or not monetary or other consideration is received.
v. Shall not publish cases for promotional purposes, advertise surgical results, display "before and after" photographs, publicize celebrity patients, promote personal success stories unless published strictly for scientific or educational purposes with anonymized patient consent.
vi. Shall not publish any statement that creates unrealistic expectations, misrepresents treatment outcomes, conceals risks, promote unproven therapies, secret remedy or treatment whose composition, scientific basis, safety or efficacy is not adequately established or which is otherwise prohibited under applicable law.
vii. No RMP shall, directly or indirectly, offer, pay, solicit, receive or participate in any commission, rebate, bonus, gift, gratuity, referral fee, lead-generation fee or other consideration in relation to the promotion or advertisement of medical services, where such consideration is connected with the referral, recommendation or procurement of patients, specimens or materials for diagnosis, treatment, surgery or other medical services.
viii. The engagement of advertising agencies, digital marketing agencies,

influencers or online platforms shall not be structured in a manner that results in payment or consideration being linked to the procurement or referral of individual patients.

ix. No RMP or hospital/medical institution shall make comparative claims such as "best", "No.1", "leading", "most trusted", "top", "number one", "unmatched" or similar superiority claims unless the claim is objectively verifiable, based on a transparent and independently ascertainable methodology and is otherwise permissible under applicable law.

Provided, Any ranking or award relied upon in advertising shall be capable of independent verification, and material conditions, methodology and relevant date, details of award giving organization or firm shall be disclosed where necessary to avoid misleading the public.

x. No RMP or hospital/medical institution shall use discounts, limited-period offers, contests, coupons, gifts, cashbacks, referral benefits, free procedures or similar inducements in a manner that is likely to encourage unnecessary medical consultation, diagnostic investigation or treatment or otherwise amounts to solicitation of patients.

Any lawful disclosure of charges, packages or fees shall be factual, transparent and not misleading.

xi. No RMP shall use or permit any celebrity, influencer, patient, employee or third party to promote professional services through prohibited testimonials, endorsements or recommendations. Any material commercial relationship in lawful public-health or informational communication shall be transparently disclosed in accordance with applicable law. No RMP or hospital/medical institution shall use a third party as an intermediary to do indirectly what the RMP or institution is prohibited from doing directly.

xii. No RMP or hospital/medical institution shall procure, manipulate or cause any third party to procure or manipulate fake followers, likes, reviews, ratings, testimonials, comments, views or other digital engagement, or manipulate search rankings, visibility or algorithms to create a misleading impression of professional standing.

8.2 **Exceptions from Prohibitions for RMP –**

i. Only research-based communication, wherein they have published interesting case studies in reputed medical journals shall be allowed.

ii. A medical practitioner is however permitted to make a formal announcement regarding the following :

a) On starting practice.

b) On change of type of practice.

c) On changing address.

d) On temporary absence from duty.

e) On resumption of another practice.

f) On succeeding to another practice.

g) Public declaration of charge.

iii. Medical Practitioners may deliver lectures or talks on public health and diseases for public awareness through television, radio and electronic media in their own name and designation, without promoting their employer organization.

iv. Medical Practitioners can issue health education and general information pamphlets/ brochures to the patients visiting their clinic/ hospital but these should not contain guarantee of cure or superiority over others or unsubstantiated claims or misleading information

v. Greeting on days of national importance or related to medical profession, etc. of National Day, etc. can be given by Medical Practitioners, however same should not contain advertisement of a professional gains.

8.3 **Hospital/Medical Institution Advertising**

i. Hospitals/Medical Institutions may disseminate factual, objective and verifiable information concerning their name, location, contact details, departments, facilities, equipment, services, emergency services, accreditation status, charges and other institutional information permitted by applicable law.

ii. Such communication shall not contain patient solicitation, inducement, comparative superiority claims, guarantees of cure or treatment outcome, unverifiable or exaggerated claims, or promotional portrayal of an individual RMP. The form, medium or frequency of communication shall not convert otherwise factual information into solicitation or promotional self-aggrandizement.

iii. Where advertising is permitted under applicable law, the communication shall remain within the scope permitted by such law and these Guidelines.

CHAPTER-IV

MISCELLANEOUS DO'S AND DON'TS

9. Responsibilities of Hospital/Medical Institutions and RMP

9.1 Clinical Establishments may advertise only factual information, where it is limited to objective and verifiable particulars concerning the establishment,

including the name of the establishment, contact details, departments functioning, diagnostic facilities, emergency services, accreditation status, other facilities offered and applicable fees. A hospital website containing a directory of its doctors, containing the names, recognised qualifications, specialties, registration details and availability of its doctors, that serves a patient-information function; shall be regarded materially distinct from a paid or promotional advertisement or inducement.

9.2 Use of the photograph/image of an RMP shall not be permitted; where such use constitutes self-advertisement, solicitation or promotional publicity. In particular, use of self-photograph or similar publicity material on the letterhead or signboard of a consulting room or clinical establishment shall be governed by Regulations 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 of the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002, and regarded as unethical conduct.

9.3 RMP can issue a formal announcement which are factual, non-promotional and limited in scope regarding starting of practice, change of address, change of practice type, temporary absence, resumption of practice, public declaration of consultation fees.

9.4 All healthcare platforms hosting RMP shall ensure compliance with NMC ethical advertising norms, prohibition of paid ranking of doctors, maintain transparency in listing practices.

CHAPTER-V

REGULATORY PROCEDURE FOR OVERSIGHT AND ENFORCEMENT MECHANISM

10. Penalties / Corrective Measures

10.1 In case of violation of the above guidelines, actions will be taken by the concerned SMC against the erring RMP in accordance with the provisions ofthe NMC Act and Regulations made thereunder.The following graded action **may be contemplated** by the SMC concerned;

i. **First Violation**: Warning and mandatory ethics training.
ii. **Second Violation:** Censure and monetary penalty.
iii. **Third Violation:** Suspension of registration (3-6 months).
iv. **Serious Violation** (Misleading cure claims, inducement for patients, digital mass solicitation, etc.) Suspension of 6-12 months.
v. **Repeated Violations:** Removal from medical register for 1-3 years.

Any violation of these Guidelines by an RMP may, where applicable, constitute professional or ethical misconduct and shall be dealt with by the competent authority in accordance with the NMC Act, 2019, the applicable Ethics Regulations and the principles of natural justice.

The competent authority may, where legally permissible, impose such disciplinary or corrective measures, including censure, direction for corrective compliance/ethics sensitization, restriction or suspension of registration,

removal from the register for a specified period or otherwise, and monetary penalty, as may be authorized under the NMC Act and applicable Regulations.

Explanation: Hospital/medical institutionsengaging in unethical advertising shall be dealt with in accordance with applicable Clinical Establishment Act and Rules framed thereunder/ any other State Act as applicable.

10.2 The penalties shall be imposed only after issuing a show-cause notice to the defaulting RMP and providing an opportunity to explain or clarify the alleged violation, in accordance with the applicable laws.

10.3 Where an RMP is found to be in violation of these Guidelines, the SMC shall issue a reasoned and speaking order setting out:

i. the specific violation identified;
ii. the contentions of the defaulting RMP/ and reasons for acceptance / rejection of the same;
iii. the reasons and basis for imposing the penalties.

11. Appellate Mechanism

11.1 Any RMP aggrieved by the findings or decision of the SMC may prefer an appeal before the Appellate Authority i.e, EMRB,NMC, within 60 days under Section 30 (3) of NMC Act, 2019.

11.2 The Appellate Authority shall independently examine the appeal and may, where considered necessary, call for the records and direct a fresh assessment, seek additional opinion, or undertake such further examination as it deems fit in accordance with these Guidelines.

11.3 The Appellate Authority shall pass a reasoned and speaking order, clearlyrecording the basis for affirming, modifying, or setting aside the findings of the SMC.

11.4 The decision on the first appeal may be contested by the RMP through second appeal, in accordance with Section 30 (4), NMC Act, 2019, within sixty days of communication of such decision.

11.5 In case of any violation by a hospital or medical institution, the corresponding penalty and appellate mechanism, in accordance with the Clinical Establishments Act and the Rules framed thereunder/ any other State Act as applicable, shall apply. Where an RMP has personally authorized, participated in, endorsed or otherwise been responsible for the prohibited communication, the professional conduct of such RMP may separately be examined by the concerned State Medical Council, Ethics and Medical Registration Board or National Medical Commission, as applicable.

12. Power to Issue Clarifications

The National Medical Commission may issue such clarifications, advisories, standard operating procedures or procedural instructions, consistent with these Guidelines and the National Medical Commission Act, 2019, as may be necessary for their effective and uniform implementation.