

TAPS | therapeutic advertising pre-vetting service

GUIDELINE 1 General	Observing a High Standard of Social Responsibility
Last Updated	July 2016
What kind of product is this guideline for?	This guideline is intended for advertisers of Therapeutic Products (medicines and medical devices), Natural Health Products and Dietary Supplements, Health Services and Methods of Treatment.
What is the purpose of this guideline?	This guideline provides background information to help advertisers to meet Principle 1 of the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code. <i>Principle 1. Advertisements should observe a high standard of social responsibility particularly as consumers often rely on such products, devices and services for their health and wellbeing</i>

BACKGROUND

The overriding consideration in the ASA's Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code (The Code) is that "advertisements should observe a high standard of social responsibility particularly as consumers rely on such products, devices and services for their health and well-being" (Principle 1).

Whilst it is difficult to be definitive about a "high standard of social responsibility" it is clear that the Advertising Standards Complaints Board (ASCB) does set a higher standard for therapeutic advertisements (as they also do for financial & liquor advertisements and advertising to children) than for advertisements for other products as per the general Code of Ethics where "advertisements should be prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and society". The ASCB (Complaints Board) decisions have given some interpretation to this in key complaints that have been upheld. Hence there is now a good body of ASCB decisions, which help to define the "high standard of social responsibility" for therapeutic and health advertising.

Each principle in The Code and the accompanying guidelines have the underlying theme of "observing a high standard of social responsibility" with regard to an advertisement giving adequate and appropriate information on the risks, cautions and overseeing of health professional advice. Advertisements must also be truthful, balanced and not misleading.

The ASA Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code should be read in its entirety prior to developing advertisements. ***This code is the primary code used by the TAPS Adjudicators when pre-vetting advertisements.***