



Position Statement Sale, Endorsement and Recommendation of Products

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Why develop a Position Statement?



- ▶ To protect public safety and interest
- ▶ To protect the credibility of the profession, and
- ▶ To protect members against conflict of interest and other possible complaints

What is a Conflict of Interest?



- ▶ Occurs when, in the mind of a reasonable person, a dietitian has a personal interest that could improperly influence their professional judgement (*Steinecke and CDO, 2015*)
- ▶ A conflict of interest may arise in a transaction that involves a dietitian, a dietitian's family, or a corporation owned by the dietitian or a member of their family

Disclosure



- ▶ Disclose any perceived or actual conflict of interest at the **first possible opportunity**
- ▶ Document disclosure and be prepared to verify information about a conflict of interest when called upon in the case of a potential complaint against your practice
- ▶ If selling a product, disclose to a client when it is being sold for profit

Position of NSDA



- ▶ This position statement discourages the sale, endorsement and recommendation of products or product lines
- ▶ However, if a dietitian chooses to sell, endorse or recommend a product or product line:
 - ▶ They must be honest, transparent, objective and use an evidence based approach
 - ▶ They **MUST NOT** recommend, sell or endorse products or product lines that are unnecessary, or where evidence of the product's efficacy or safety is not supported by quality evidence-based research

Position of NSDA



- ▶ This position statement is relevant to dietitians when they recommend, sell or endorse products in association with their title, and also in their personal lives when not using their professional title
- ▶ Dietitians shall not use professional titles and/or initials or make reference to being a member of the dietetics profession with respect to any product that does not relate to the provision of dietetics services
- ▶ *Example*
 - ▶ A dietitian selling kettle bells or other athletic equipment must not use his/her professional designation or make reference to it
 - ▶ A dietitian must not endorse or sell a product line that includes nutrition related products that are not supported by clear evidence

Clear Evidence



- ▶ Nutrition advice and guidance must be current, based on best practices and be evidence-informed
- ▶ Evidence must be of sufficient quality to justify the advice/guidance
- ▶ Where there is insufficient quality evidence of the efficacy or safety of a product or product line, you are expected to disclose the issues and not to misrepresent the product or product line by creating a false impression

Endorsement



- ▶ Refers to the act of promoting or recommending a product or product line **in exchange for financial or personal gain**
- ▶ Examples:
 - ▶ *A dietitian agrees to appear in an advertisement for a specific product line because it will advance his career and he will receive public recognition*
 - ▶ *A dietitian placing a sponsor's logo on her website in exchange for a discount on the purchase of the product line*
 - ▶ *A dietitian sampling a product or product line in a grocery store in exchange for a substantial gift from the grocery store*
 - ▶ *A dietitian receiving corporate sponsorship at a conference to promote a specific product*

Recommendation



- ▶ Refers to the act of making a suggestion or providing advice regarding the use of a specific product or product line
- ▶ Examples:
 - ▶ *Recommending a specific product to a client during a grocery store tour but not receiving personal or financial gain for the recommendation*
 - ▶ *Recommending a specific product during an individual consultation or group presentation but not receiving personal or financial gain for the recommendation*
 - ▶ *Writing an article recommending a specific product but not receiving personal or financial gain for the recommendation*

Sale/Selling



- ▶ Refers to the exchange of a product for monetary value or equivalent
- ▶ A dietitian's professional services are not included in this definition (i.e. individual consultation)
- ▶ *Example:*
 - ▶ *A dietitian sells vitamin and mineral supplements*

If the dietitian chooses to recommend, sell or endorse, the dietitian:



- ▶ Discloses, in advance, any potential conflicts of interest
- ▶ Discloses, in advance, any industry relationships that exist between the dietitian and the product or product line
- ▶ Provides objective, evidence-based information about the product or product line
- ▶ Does not misrepresent the product or product line where evidence is lacking

When recommending, selling or endorsing, the dietitian:



- ▶ Gives the client options and reassures them that service will not be compromised if the product is not purchased
- ▶ Offers the client at least one alternative choice to a specific product or product line
- ▶ Provides education to clients about factors to consider when selecting a product or product line
- ▶ Demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the product or product line including (where applicable) indications, contraindications, interactions, side effects or adverse effects

When recommending, selling or endorsing, the dietitian:



- ▶ When indicated, demonstrates an in-depth knowledge of the client's medical history and current disease states/processes
- ▶ Assures the client that their selection of an alternate product will not adversely affect the nutrition services provided by the dietitian
- ▶ Does not guarantee the success of any product or product line or imply unjustified expectations about the results which the client may achieve by using the product or product line

When recommending, selling or endorsing, the dietitian:



- ▶ Does not recommend or sell supplements unless dietary approaches do not meet the nutritional needs of a client or unless policy recommends (i.e. folic acid for women of child bearing age)
- ▶ Where appropriate, establishes a suitable follow up plan
- ▶ Where appropriate, documents all recommendations/sales

