

BOARD NOTICE 181 OF 2011**The Allied Health Professions Council of South Africa**

61 Rose Street, Pretoria, 0084. Private Bag X4, Queenswood, 0121
Telephone (012) 329-4001 Fax 329-2279 email: registrar@ahpcsa.co.za
Website: www.ahpcsa.co.za

9 November 2011

UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT: GROUPONS OR ANY OTHER SUCH SIMILAR SCHEME

All Allied Health Professions Council of South Africa Professional Boards [Homeopathy, Naturopathy and Phytotherapy (PBHNP); Chiropractic and Osteopathy (PBCO); Therapeutic Aromatherapy, Therapeutic Reflexology, Therapeutic Massage Therapy (PBARM); Ayurveda, Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture and Unani-Tibb (PBACMU)] have deemed the practice of offering discounts through Groupons or any other similar scheme, by practitioners within its ambit to patients / clients, to be unprofessional conduct for all allied health professions.

Groupons are offers of discount to members of the public that promote multiple purchase units of product(s) or services from a particular provider registered on the Groupon scheme. It is a deal-of-the-day website that features discounted vouchers and gift certificates which can be used at various companies and entities; Groupon realizes income via the scheme by retaining approximately half the money the customer pays for the coupon.

In light of the above, the Groupon scheme, as well as similar schemes, could be interpreted as the practitioners splitting their fees or even enjoying a certain financial interest which is clearly contrary to the '*Rules Specifying the Acts or Omissions in Respect of Which Disciplinary Action may be taken by the Board*' published under Government Notice No R. 1746 of 12 August 1983,

read together with section 54 (1) "General" published under Regulation No R127 of 12 February 2001.

The Allied Health Professions Council therefore views a practitioner engaging in Groupon and/or similar schemes as one which pays or gives commission, remuneration or a pecuniary benefit for the recommendation of patients. It furthermore deems it as a practitioner sharing a fee charged for a service with Groupon. This is expressly contrary to Regulation 1746 of 12 August 1983, specifically Chapter 2 Regulation 9 thereof read together with section 54 (1) "General" published under Regulation No R127 of 12 February 2001.

In addition to the above, the Allied Health Professions Council views the use of Groupon and other such similar schemes as a form of advertising in a manner which is expressly prohibited by its Regulations.

Should the Allied Health Professions Council become aware of registered practitioners engaging in the abovementioned prohibited practice, such a practitioner shall face disciplinary action in terms of Sections 23-30 of the Allied Health Professions Act 63 of 1982 (as amended).



DR LOUIS MULLINDER
REGISTRAR: AHPCSA