

# NFTHD #107: Can You Run Public Facing Activities That Support Vaccination?

World Immunization Week (WIW), held annually from 24–30 April, provides an important opportunity to reflect on the role of immunisation in protecting public health across the life course. It is therefore unsurprising that companies often ask whether – and how – they can contribute to public-facing activities that support vaccination without crossing into advertising. The short answer is that carefully framed, educational communications are both possible and appropriate.

Referencing “vaccines” or “vaccination” as a therapeutic class in consumer-facing materials is not inherently problematic. What matters is context, intent, and how the material is likely to be understood by a reasonable consumer.

Promotion is generally characterised by messaging that seeks to influence individual behaviour in relation to a prescription medicine – for example, by encouraging a personal decision to vaccinate, highlighting specific diseases in a way that implicitly points to known products, or otherwise using language or framing that could reasonably be understood as encouraging uptake of a particular prescription medicine. By contrast, population-level messaging focuses on explaining why immunisation matters overall, situating vaccination within a broader public-health context, without prompting a specific treatment decision. In this sense, such communications are less about disease education and more about public-health advocacy.

This distinction is particularly important when considering claims about vaccination. Making positive statements about the benefits of vaccination does not, of itself, constitute promotion of a prescription medicine. Promoting vaccination as a public-health concept – rather than the use of a specific or identifiable vaccine – can be appropriate where messaging is framed at a population level, avoids product references, and aligns with established public-health campaigns. Statements such as “*From saving infants and children to helping adults and older populations stay healthy, vaccines have transformed global health*” reflect this approach and mirror the population-level framing used during World Immunization Week, including in IFPMA-led industry messaging.

## How does the Code apply in this context?

Section 12.2 is the most relevant reference point, although it is not a perfect fit. Section 12.2 is directed at education and disease awareness activities that provide information about medical conditions and the treatments that may be prescribed by healthcare professionals. Public-facing support for vaccination at a population or policy level sits somewhat outside this model, which is why the fit is imperfect. Nonetheless, the underlying principles remain useful.

## NFTHD #107 CONTINUED...

Clauses 12.2(a), (b) and (d) are readily applicable, while clause 12.2(c) requires a more contextual application. The emphasis should be on the broader impact of disease at a population level, and on vaccination as a general preventive concept, rather than as an individual treatment decision. In this context, individualised calls to action – such as encouraging a person to seek advice about their own vaccination – may be inappropriate, as they risk shifting large-scale population advocacy towards influencing individual treatment decisions.

This is distinct from acknowledging the role of healthcare professionals in general terms. While vaccination is highly effective, it is not appropriate for everyone at all times, and all our communications need balance. A light, non-directive acknowledgement that vaccination decisions are made by healthcare professionals based on individual circumstances is one way of supporting balance and clarity, without encouraging individual action or detracting from the population-level intent of the messaging.

In addition, Overarching Principles 1, 6, and 10 apply. These emphasise the importance of transparency regarding company involvement across all activities, as well as ensuring that all communications are accurate, compliant with legislative requirements, and appropriate to the needs of a consumer-facing audience.

Where public-health impacts are described, these should be supported by credible, independent evidence. Using third-party data – such as material published by the World Health Organization or Australian government health agencies – helps anchor messaging in established public-health evidence and reinforces its educational intent. Similarly, directing audiences to independent public-health sources for further information, rather than company-owned channels, can assist in maintaining appropriate distance from promotion.

Ultimately, World Immunization Week highlights that industry has a legitimate role in supporting public-health awareness. When communications are framed around education, population benefit, and trusted public-health themes, they can contribute meaningfully to the conversation – without becoming advertising.

Examples of public-health-focused vaccination messaging can be found on LinkedIn under [#WIW2026](#) [#VaccinesForLife](#) [#TeamVaccines](#) [#AlwaysInnovating](#).

<end>