Australian agency has launched investigations into clear aligner providers

By DTI

Sydney, Australia: The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) has launched investigations into four providers of clear aligner therapy amid claims of hushed incentives being provided to dentists and the breaching of advertising laws.

AHPRA has launched investigations into market leader Invisalign and the telodentistry providers SmileDirectClub, EZ Smile and WonderSmile. According to the Sydney Morning Herald, the four separate investigations are following upon complaints from within the dental industry about the business and marketing practices of the companies.

The complaints surfaced through articles in The Age and the Herald and accused health regulators of failing to enforce the rules. The authors of the articles said that federal regulators had received complaints about social media influencers promoting clear aligners without proper disclosure, which, if true, would be a breach of the law.

The Therapeutic Goods Advertising Code stipulates that any payments received for the advocacy of therapeutic goods—clear aligners, in this case—must be disclosed and made to the public. Federal advertisers of health products can, therefore, face maximum fines of AUD 25 million (€14.69 million). Undisclosed promotion through social media would also breach the health practitioner regulation national law, the authors pointed out, which attracts fines of AUD 50,000 per advertisement for individuals and double that for companies.

“Nobody is even bothering to pretend to follow the law,” read one of the complaint letters from a dental industry insider, who believed that revealing his identity would cause him to lose his job.

One letter from a Melbourne prosthetist said the undisclosed promotion presented a “clear and present danger to vulnerable health consumers.”

Industry insiders also complained to health regulators that Invisalign Australia was offering volume discounts to dentists. Based on the number of patients who ordered the Invisalign cases, the discounts, it was claimed, provided an incentive to dentists and orthodontists to sell the company’s clear aligners and could result in patients being sold an unsuitable product. Invisalign Australia confirmed to the Herald that volume discounts were being offered to accredited dentists. The company said that such discounts are permitted under Australian law and common in the industry.

In addition to the AHPRA investigations, the Therapeutic Goods Administration confirmed to the Herald that it had opened investigations into potential breaches of its advertising code with respect to clear aligners.

www.idem-singapore.com

24 - 26 April 2020 Suntec Singapore

THE LEADING DENTAL EXHIBITION
AND CONFERENCE IN ASIA PACIFIC

INTRODUCING THE IDEM 2020 MAIN CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Special Care Dentistry Symposium
Highlighting the treatment needs of patients with special needs, this full day forum is one of the first in Asia to focus on this niche topic in dentistry.

Dental Hygienist and Therapist Forum
The 2020 dental hygienist and therapist forum will focus on issues such as dealing with fear of dental visits, the periodontal probe and more.

Trade Exhibition
Discover the latest products and services in the dental industry and meet over 500 exhibitors at IDEM.

Hands-On Workshops
Hone your skills and learn new techniques at the limited attendance, hands-on workshops.

Secure your passes online for IDEM 2020

Dental Tribune Asia Pacific Edition | 06/2019

ASIA PACIFIC NEWS