

Final

**RHODE ISLAND SUPREME COURT
ETHICS ADVISORY PANEL
Opinion No. 2000-3, Request No. 802
Issued June 14, 2000**

Facts:

A physician routinely refers patients who have personal injury or workers' compensation claims to the inquiring attorney. One such case resulted in a substantial recovery. The inquiring attorney wants to thank the physician for recommending the client by presenting the physician with a gift certificate in the amount of \$1000. The inquiring attorney and the physician are also social acquaintances.

Issue Presented:

The inquiring attorney asks whether giving such a gift would violate the Rules of Professional Conduct.

Opinion:

The gift is a violation of Rule 7.2(c) which prohibits an attorney from giving anything of value for recommending a lawyer's services.

Reasoning:

Rule 7.2(c) states:

(c) A lawyer shall not give anything of value to a person for recommending the lawyer's services....

The Rule is clear in its prohibition. The Panel therefore concludes that the inquiring attorney may not properly give the physician a gift under the circumstances he/she has described. See R.I. Sup. Ct. Ethics Advisory Panel Op. 89-5 (1989) (gift to client in appreciation for referral is violative of Rule 7.2(c)).