

ETHICS ADVISORY PANEL
OPINION #94-27 REQUEST #486
Issued May 5, 1994

An attorney seeks Panel advice with regard to practicing law in this state under the name "The Women's Law Center." The practice will primarily consist of representing women in domestic violence and family law matters.

Rule 7.5 entitled "Firm Names and Letterhead" states that:

(a) A lawyer shall not use a firm name, letterhead or other professional designation that violates Rule 7.1. A trade name may be used by a lawyer in private practice if it does not imply a connection with a government agency or with a public or charitable legal services organization and is not otherwise in violation of Rule 7.1.

Rule 7.5(a) specifically authorizes the use of trade names as long as 1) the name is not false or misleading within the meaning of Rule 7.1, which governs public communications generally, and 2) the name does not imply a connection with a charitable organization. The Panel believes that the name "The Women's Law Center" implies a connection with a charitable legal services organization, is likely to be misleading to the public and may not be used by the inquiring attorney.