

SUMMARY

DR. HUGHES (CPSO# 31872)

1. Disposition

On February 22, 2016, the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (“the Committee”) required cardiologist Dr. Hughes to appear before a panel of the Committee to be cautioned with respect to completing and submitting an Annual Renewal Form to College, and reviewing the information on the form to ensure its accuracy.

2. Introduction

Staff from the office of the Chief of Staff at Haliburton Highlands Health Services (HHHS) contacted the College regarding Dr. Hughes’s hospital privileges. According to their review of hospital documentation over the last 10 years, Dr. Hughes never held privileges at HHHS. However, the College website indicates that Dr. Hughes did have privileges there. Staff requested that the information on the website be corrected.

The College investigator reviewed Dr. Hughes’s College Annual Renewal Forms for the years from 2007 to 2014. On those forms, Dr. Hughes had listed that he held hospital privileges at HHHS

Dr. Hughes responded that in the 1980s, the doctors at HHHS asked him to apply for privileges so that he might look in on patients when he was there for his monthly clinics. He believes that the last time he saw a patient at HHHS was in August 1996.

When the HHHS was rebuilding, he relocated his clinic to the Haliburton Highlands Family Health Team. It may be that, at that time, he did not re-apply for hospital privileges but he cannot recall. He certainly did not intend to deceive the College or anyone else in this matter.

As he tried to trace the source of the problem with his staff he realized that the person responsible for the paperwork did not understand the distinction between the “Haliburton Highlands Health Services” and the “Haliburton Highlands Family Health Team.” He had not

noticed that there was no paperwork in support of the hospital privilege issue and no one drew to his attention that a formal application had not recently been submitted.

No advantage has accrued to him as a result of this error. The task of managing the paper work for College re-application has been reassigned.

3. Committee Process

An Internal Medicine Panel of the Committee, consisting of public and physician members, met to review the relevant records and documents related to the complaint, as well as College policies and relevant legislation.

4. Committee's Analysis

The "Final Acknowledgement" of the Annual Renewal Form section states: "I am the member submitting this [2014] registration renewal. I confirm that the information contained herein is true, complete and accurate. **I acknowledge that it may be found to be professional misconduct to provide false or misleading information to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.** [Emphasis appears in the original documents.]"

The annual renewal forms to the College are clear that the member is personally required to submit the renewal form, and to acknowledge and certify the information on it is accurate.

The Committee is troubled by Dr. Hughes's failure to take responsibility for the error, and instead blames a staff member in his response to the College. As part of self-regulation, the College relies on its members to certify that the information on annual renewal forms is "true, complete, and accurate." The Committee considered referring this matter to the Discipline Committee; however, there is nothing before us to indicate that Dr. Hughes intentionally misled or deceived the College or that he otherwise benefitted from an inaccurate form.