

**SUMMARY of the Decision of the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee
(the Committee)**
(Information is available about the complaints process [here](#) and about the Committee [here](#))

**Dr. Michael Hart (CPSO # 94570)
(the Respondent)**

INTRODUCTION

The Complainant contacted the College to express concern about the Respondent's social media posts regarding gender-affirming care, including comments about transgender patients, physicians who provide gender-affirming care, and parents of transgender youth.

COMMITTEE'S DECISION

A panel of the Committee considered this matter at its meeting of September 19, 2024. The Committee required the Respondent to appear before a panel of the Committee to be cautioned with respect to his failure to follow the College's policies, *Professional Behaviour* and *Social Media*, and not conducting himself in a professional manner when discussing health-related information on a social media platform.

COMMITTEE'S ANALYSIS

The College's *Social Media* policy recognises that physicians have rights to freedom of expression under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, subject to reasonable limits. The policy, noting that physicians hold a respected position in society, directs physicians to uphold the standards of medical professionalism, conduct themselves in a professional manner, and not engage in disruptive behaviour when using social media.

The Committee was of the view that the Respondent's social media posts constitute disruptive behaviour and could interfere with the delivery of quality healthcare to transgender patients and the perceived safety of physicians providing gender-affirming care. In addition, the Respondent's social media posts could reasonably have a negative impact on the reputation of the profession and the public trust in the profession. As such, the Respondent did not abide by the College's policies and failed to behave in a professional manner while identifying as a physician on his publicly accessible social media accounts.

The Committee considered the Respondent's significant history with the College which included a previous caution in person regarding his social media usage. The Respondent received this caution prior to making the social media posts of concern in

this case. This made the Respondent's conduct more concerning, given that it cannot be considered an isolated lapse in judgment.

The Committee acknowledged that the Respondent had expressed some understanding of the impact of his social media posts on the public, has removed these posts from his social media account, and done work to educate himself on transgender issues in healthcare. However, given the seriousness of the Respondent's conduct together with his history with the College, the Committee determined that it was appropriate to caution the Respondent, as set out above.