

**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. David Webster (CPSO # 29976)

INTRODUCTION

In July 2017, the College received information from Dr. X (Diagnostic Radiology) regarding the behaviour of Dr. Webster (Nuclear Medicine). He described Dr. Webster as pursuing a “multiyear campaign to discredit [Dr. X], the PET-CT program, Cancer Imaging Program and [Cancer Care Ontario] CCO”, and stated that Dr. Webster had been making “hostile and aggressive” statements which “lack collegiality... professionalism... respect and sensitivity”. Subsequently, the Committee approved the Registrar’s appointment of investigators to conduct a review of Dr. Webster’s practice and conduct.

COMMITTEE’S DECISION

A General Panel of the Committee considered this matter at its meeting of July 17, 2019. The Committee required Dr. Webster to attend at the College to be cautioned in person with respect to his professionalism.

COMMITTEE’S ANALYSIS

As a result of the investigation, the Committee had concerns about Dr. Webster’s communications (in the form of letters and social media posts) relating to his efforts to improve access to diagnostic PET scanning in Ontario.

Recipients of Dr. Webster’s communications noted that they found the communications to be “threatening” and/or “unprofessional and harassing”. Dr. Webster persisted in sending his communications despite requests that he stop, and despite being advised that individuals were perceiving them as harassing and unprofessional. While Dr. Webster advised that he believed that his communications comply with the College’s guideline on social media and policy on professionalism, he acknowledged that he has at times “used more provocative language than necessary” to pursue his cause on social media, and stated that in the future he will “temper any unnecessary rhetoric”.

The Committee noted that Dr. Webster previously received a caution in writing from the Committee to maintain professionalism in his communications at all times, after the Committee found that some of his comments (again, in relation to access to PET scans) had an unreasonably aggressive tone and that he sometimes resorted to sarcasm. The Committee also took issue with Dr. Webster making personal attacks against the complainant in that case, which he disseminated to a wide audience.

The College's Practice Guide and the College policy, *Physician Behaviour in the Professional Environment* together set out the College's expectations regarding a physician's professionalism and collegiality, along with its expectations for physicians who engage in advocacy.

In the present case, the Committee was of the opinion that Dr. Webster, in pursuing his campaign in this area, crossed the line beyond appropriate advocacy and acted in an unprofessional and unacceptable manner.

The Committee pointed out that regardless of the importance of the issue being advocated, physicians are expected to demonstrate the requisite respect, civility, and professionalism.

Based on all of the above, the Committee determined that a caution, as set out above, was warranted.