

SUMMARY

DR. JABU MATHEW ABRAHAM (CPSO# 108184)

1. Disposition

On October 19, 2018, the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (the Committee) required Dr. Abraham (Family Medicine) to appear before a panel of the Committee to be cautioned with respect to narcotics prescribing for patients with chronic, non-cancer pain, and deficiencies in knowledge, skill and judgement in various family practice areas, including inadequate record-keeping, lack of adequate follow-up, and inappropriate referrals.

2. Introduction

The College received a public complaint raising concerns related to Dr. Abraham's prescribing of narcotics and subsequently, the Committee approved the Registrar's appointment of investigators to conduct a broad review of Dr. Abraham's practice. As part of this investigation, the Registrar appointed a Medical Inspector (MI) to review a number of Dr. Abraham's patient charts, interview Dr. Abraham, and submit a written report to the Committee.

During the course of the investigation, Dr. Abraham signed an undertaking with the College that included the following terms, among others:

- Dr. Abraham's prescribing of narcotic drugs, narcotic preparations, benzodiazepines and other targeted substances, and other monitored drugs will be supervised by a Clinical Supervisor acceptable to the College.
- Dr. Abraham shall not issue any prescription for narcotic drugs, narcotic preparations, benzodiazepines and other targeted substances and all other monitored drugs, without the prior review and authorization of the Clinical Supervisor.

The MI concluded that: Dr. Abraham fell below the standard of practice, including with respect to (among other things) opioid prescribing, medical record-keeping, and poor follow-up; Dr. Abraham displayed a lack of knowledge, skill and judgement in many areas of practice, including inappropriate referrals; and Dr. Abraham's clinical practice, behaviour or conduct does not expose nor is likely to expose his patients to harm or injury because the College has mitigated future risk of harm (the MI did note deficiencies in individual charts reviewed).

In his response to the MI report, Dr. Abraham explained that because he could not get a Clinical Supervisor for his prescribing of narcotics, he had not been prescribing these and therefore the charts do not reflect his current knowledge. He also addressed the MI's other concerns.

3. Committee Process

A Prescribing Panel of the Committee, consisting of public and physician members, met to review the relevant records and documents related to the investigation. The Committee always has before it applicable legislation and regulations, along with policies that the College has developed, which reflect the College's professional expectations for physicians practising in Ontario. Current versions of these documents are available on the College's website at www.cpsso.on.ca, under the heading "Policies & Publications."

4. Committee's Analysis

The Committee did not find itself sufficiently reassured by Dr. Abraham's response to the MI report, given the deficiencies the MI identified in this case were serious.

It is a matter of public record that Dr. Abraham's College registration expired as he resigned from College membership as of July 30, 2018. The Committee noted, however, that the College does retain jurisdiction over expired members for investigations into professional misconduct or incompetence that occurred when the individual was a College member. In this case, the

investigation pertained to care that Dr. Abraham provided while he was a College member. This was also one of three matters the Committee considered simultaneously about Dr. Abraham.

The Committee is satisfied in this case that Dr. Abraham's resignation from the College provides sufficient assurance of public protection, taking into account the steps Dr. Abraham would have to go through if he ever wished to apply again for registration as a physician in Ontario. Further, the College disseminates information about resigned physicians to other regulatory bodies.

In light of the above, the Committee decided to require Dr. Abraham to attend at the College to be cautioned in person, as set out above.