

**SUMMARY of the Decision of the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee
(the Committee)**

Information about the complaints process and the Committee is available at:
<https://www.cpsa.on.ca/Public/Services/Complaints>

Dr. Christine Anne Sheila Kennedy (CPSO # 80863)

INTRODUCTION

A health care facility where Dr. Kennedy worked wrote the College expressing concerns about Dr. Kennedy's conduct, including her ability to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and her professionalism with staff and colleagues. Subsequently, the Committee approved the Registrar's appointment of investigators to conduct a broad review of Dr. Kennedy's practice.

COMMITTEE'S DECISION

A General Panel of the Committee first considered this matter at its meeting of April 13, 2018, at which time it directed staff to negotiate an undertaking with Dr. Kennedy. Dr. Kennedy declined to sign the undertaking. Dr. Kennedy resigned from the College, effective August 14, 2018. The Committee considered then this matter again at its meeting of November 28, 2018.

The Committee required Dr. Kennedy to attend at the College to be cautioned in person with respect to failing to disclose her registration with the College of Physician and Surgeons of Alberta in the annual renewal questionnaires she submitted to the College in 2016 and 2017 and with respect to failing to maintain appropriate boundaries by inappropriately writing a referral for her friend to a specialist. The Committee also issued advice to Dr. Kennedy to reflect on the communication and professionalism issues that gave rise to similar concerns being raised by two different health care facilities where she worked.

COMMITTEE'S ANALYSIS

Failing to maintaining appropriate professional boundaries

- A health care facility where Dr. Kennedy worked informed the College that Dr. Kennedy had written a referral for her friend to a specialist, using the letterhead of the facility. Dr. Kennedy's writing a referral for her friend contravened the College policy statement *Physician Treatment of Self, Family Members, or Others Close to Them* (May 2018). Physicians may treat themselves, their family members, or other people close to them. In this particular case, Dr. Kennedy decided to provide medical care to one of her friends that was not for a minor condition or in a situation one would regard as an emergency. The Committee concluded Dr. Kennedy had disregarded the above-noted College policy and that, in doing so, she had failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. The Committee determined that it was appropriate to caution Dr. Kennedy in person, with regards to this aspect of her conduct.

Failing to communicate professionally with staff and colleagues

- The same facility also provided the College with information stating that Dr. Kennedy was unreliable in terms of her work attendance and frequently could not be reached. Another health care facility where Dr. Kennedy had worked also wrote to the College and similarly referred to her absences and unknown whereabouts on many occasions. The Committee noted that physicians have a collective responsibility to the public, which requires them to collaborate with colleagues and other health care professionals and that Dr. Kennedy failed to communicate effectively with both staff and colleagues. It noted that she was often absent from work, with no explanation for these absences, and she did not take steps to ensure that others could reach her when she was absent. In the Committee's view, this reflected poor communication and poor professionalism. The Committee decided to issue advice to Dr. Kennedy about this aspect of her conduct.

Failing to disclose information on College Annual Renewal forms

- During the course of this investigation, it also came to the College's attention that Dr. Kennedy has been practising medicine in Alberta since January 2014, but failed to disclose this when she renewed her membership with the College in 2016 and 2017. The College's annual renewal questionnaire form explicitly states that if a physician provides false or misleading information this might constitute professional misconduct. It noted that physicians should proof-read annual renewal questionnaires for accuracy. In the Committee's view, Dr. Kennedy's failure to disclose her registration in Alberta reflected a lack of professionalism in her participation in the process of self-regulation. The Committee determined that it was appropriate to caution Dr. Kennedy in person, with regards to this aspect of her conduct.