

**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. Suman Kumar Koka (CPSO #88116)  
(the Respondent)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Complainant first received methadone maintenance therapy from the Respondent in April 2017.

The Complainant contacted the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (the College) to express concerns about the Respondent's care.

## **COMPLAINANT'S CONCERNS**

**The Complainant is concerned that:**

- **"I did not meet the doctor, just spoke with him on the phone and he gave me my scripts without seeing anyone in person"**
- **"I spoke with a lady on the computer for all the scripts"**
- **"My first script was given to me without labels with only my dose on lids"**
- **"I got unlabeled methadone from [the Respondent's] office."**

## **COMMITTEE'S DECISION**

A General Panel of the Committee considered this matter at its meeting of February 20, 2019. The Committee accepted an undertaking from the Respondent and required him to attend the College to be cautioned in person with respect to delegation and use of a physician assistant (including the lack of an established physician-patient relationship and lack of examinations), and medical record-keeping.

## **COMMITTEE'S ANALYSIS**

*Concerns that the Respondent did not meet with the Complainant and that the Complainant spoke only to a female staff person via telemedicine*

- The Respondent indicated to the College that his practice makes use of a physician assistant. The physician assistant had telemedicine appointments with the Complainant.
- The College's *Delegation of Controlled Acts* policy clearly sets out that the primary consideration for every instance of delegation must be the best interests of the patient.

In the Committee's view, delegating methadone maintenance therapy to a physician assistant is not likely in the patient's best interest.

- The Committee saw no indication from the physician assistant's CV that she completed the methadone treatment workshop that was needed for this delegation to be successful.
- The delegation policy also sets out that delegation must only occur in the context of an existing physician-patient relationship, but there was no physician-patient relationship in this case. The Respondent acknowledged that he had never met the Complainant in person or over video conference before he delegated his methadone maintenance therapy to the physician assistant. The Respondent had never conducted an examination of the Complainant prior to the delegation.
- The Respondent indicated that he reviewed the physician assistant's notes of her meetings with the Complainant prior to signing the prescriptions for methadone maintenance therapy. It was impossible, however, for the Committee to distinguish the physician assistant's assessments and notes from the Respondent's notes, as they were not separately identified in the electronic medical record. The Committee could find no indication from the documentation to support the Respondent's claim that he reviewed each case with the physician assistant.
- Furthermore, the Committee found that the notes were overly templated and lacking in detail regarding history and physical examinations.

#### *Concerns regarding the dispensing of methadone*

- The Committee took no further action on the concerns respecting the dispensing of unlabelled methadone. The Respondent was not involved in the dispensing of the Complainant's methadone from the pharmacy at the addiction centre.

As a result of this investigation, the Committee had concerns about the Respondent's delegation and use of a physician assistant, and his medical record-keeping. The Committee accepted the Respondent's signed undertaking and required him to attend at the College to be cautioned in person.