

**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. Celeste Jean Thirlwell (CPSO #76629)**

**INTRODUCTION**

The College received information raising concerns about psychiatrist Dr. Thirlwell's scope of practice, in particular that she was practising pain management without having gone through the College's change of scope of practice process. Subsequently, the Committee approved the Registrar's appointment of investigators to conduct a broad review of Dr. Thirlwell's practice.

**COMMITTEE'S DECISION**

A General Panel of the Committee considered this matter at its meeting of October 16, 2019. The Committee required Dr. Thirlwell to attend at the College to be cautioned in person for prescribing opioids as treatment for sleep disorders, for not recognizing substance use disorder, for practising out of scope with respect to chronic pain management, and for lack of professionalism in not responding to the CPSO and other health care providers. The Committee also accepted two undertakings from Dr. Thirlwell related to practice restrictions (resignation of prescribing privileges) and professional education (in medical record-keeping and safer opioid prescribing).

**COMMITTEE'S ANALYSIS**

Investigation of Dr. Thirlwell's care of an individual patient revealed that she was practising out of scope in providing pain management, including opioids and benzodiazepines, to a complex patient without adequate knowledge, skill, or judgement.

Dr. Thirlwell entered into two separate undertakings to address the shortcomings in her practice identified in this and the investigation considered concurrently. The first restricts her practice such that she cannot prescribe opioids and specifies that she will abide by the College's change of scope policy if she chooses to practise chronic pain management in future. The second undertaking relates to an individualized education plan to complete professional education in opioid prescribing and medical record-keeping.

When Dr. Thirlwell entered into her undertakings with the College, she was aware that, because of the serious nature of the shortcomings identified in her practice the Committee would also require her to attend at the College to be cautioned in this and the related investigation.