

**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. Eli Alegado (CPSO# 67460)

INTRODUCTION

The College received information raising concerns about Dr. Alegado's conduct in posts he made to social media (in particular, a Facebook page he maintains dedicated to the support of Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte). Subsequently, the Committee approved the Registrar's appointment of investigators to conduct a broad review of Dr. Alegado's practice.

COMMITTEE'S DECISION

A General Panel of the Committee considered this matter at its meeting of March 13, 2019. The Committee required Dr. Alegado to attend at the College to be cautioned in person with respect to inappropriate use of social media and breach of confidentiality of a patient's personal health information. The Committee also requested that the Respondent: 1) review the CPSO Position Statement entitled *Social Media – Appropriate Use by Physicians* and provide a written report to the College reflecting on this document and how he will change his use of social media so as not to bring the reputation of the medical profession into disrepute; and 2) review the CPSO Policy Statement entitled *Confidentiality of Personal Health Information* and provide a written report to the College reflecting on physicians' obligations in this regard and the impact on patients of exposure of their personal health information.

COMMITTEE'S ANALYSIS

The Committee noted the following points in reaching its decision:

- Dr. Alegado acknowledges his support of President Duterte, including political commentary, on his Facebook page. He identifies himself as a physician, using his medical credentials, on his Facebook account.
- Of concern, Dr. Alegado uses his social media platforms to provide commentary regarding the scourge of substance use and he posted screen shots of laboratory results for at least one of his patients who has substance abuse and mental health issues. Although he redacted some identifying information, the date of birth of the patient and the date of testing remained visible.
- Dr. Alegado mistakenly believes that he did not violate patient privacy, despite a conversation with a College medical adviser to leave out patient health information

from his on line discussions of politics or other matters.

- Dr. Alegado's decision to post such information is potentially harmful to the patient, should he have discovered the post and seen his own laboratory test results (which he could easily recognize from the birth date and the date of the testing, regardless of Dr. Alegado's having obscured other patient identifiers). Dr. Alegado's actions in breaching confidentiality effectively destroy the mutual trust necessary to form a therapeutic relationship with patients.
- Dr. Alegado should ensure he maintains patient confidentiality at all times. He also needs to express the political positions he is taking in a professional way, in keeping with his obligations as set out in CPSO policies and position statements.
- This particular case highlights the bounds of professionalism governing physicians in both the professional and personal spheres. Privacy and social media policy breaches with specific patient impact violate Dr. Alegado's professional obligations and also have the potential to create doubt and mistrust amongst his other patients, who would doubtless find troubling Dr. Alegado's decision to post the results of another patient's laboratory results to a public forum.

Given its concern that Dr. Alegado's Facebook post did not comply with his professional and ethical obligations, the Committee issued its caution as set out above.