

## **SUMMARY**

### **DR. KIRAN JULIA CHEEMA (CPSO# 88243)**

#### **1. Disposition**

On September 15, 2016, the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (“the Committee”) required family physician Dr. Cheema to appear before a panel of the Committee to be cautioned with respect to professional behaviour and office management. The Committee also requested that Dr. Cheema conduct a literature review and prepare a written report for submission to the College in advance of attending at the College to be cautioned with respect to how she intends to follow College policy on accepting new patients going forward.

#### **2. Introduction**

Patient A complained to the College that Dr. Cheema failed to administer her office properly by declining to accept Patient A as a rostered patient, despite initially giving Patient A the impression that she would be accepting Patient A into her practice by providing a requisition for blood work and advising Patient A to schedule a second appointment to review the results.

Patient A described the numerous telephone calls she made to confirm whether or not she had been accepted as a patient, and provided details about contradictory information from Dr.

Cheema’s office about whether she was accepting new patients, depending on who called the office. Dr. Cheema’s office staff cancelled a second appointment that had taken Patient A some time to arrange the day before the appointment, telling Patient A that she had not been rostered as a patient. Patient A felt that Dr. Cheema had wasted weeks of time which could have been more productively spent searching for another physician if Dr. Cheema had not indicated initially that she would accept Patient A into her practice.

Dr. Cheema responded that she had told Patient A from the beginning that she might not be able to accept Patient A to her roster. She stated that her practice was full and that she had overbooked appointments to accept new patients and had to take steps to contact them (including Patient A) to say should could not provide care. She also stated that she could see Patient A because of her policy not to provide care to patients who also obtain treatment from pain clinics.

### 3. Committee Process

A Family Practice Panel of the Committee, consisting of public and physician members, met to review the relevant records and documents related to the complaint. 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.cpso.on.ca](http://www.cpso.on.ca), under the heading "Policies & Publications."

### 4. Committee's Analysis

The Committee noted that Patient A and Dr. Cheema offered contradictory accounts of what had occurred between them. Nonetheless, Patient A was able to provide copies of her telephone records in support of the contacts with Dr. Cheema's office. Dr. Cheema was not able to provide documentation in support of her account of what she had told Patient A at the initial appointment. The Committee noted that Dr. Cheema had provided a requisition for blood work and that this suggested she would be seeing Patient A further.

The Committee felt that Dr. Cheema's management of the incident with Patient A did not accord with her obligations as outlined in the policy on accepting new patients, and that the explanations she provided for not accepting Patient A amounted to screening, which is unacceptable. The Committee also felt that the information Dr. Cheema's communications to patients through her office staff indicated that there were problems with office management. The College investigator was able to confirm Patient A's account of receiving contradictory answers when contacting Dr. Cheema's office to see if she was accepting new patients.

The Committee's concern about Dr. Cheema's handling of this matter was elevated because of her prior history of complaints related to issues of professionalism. The Committee was troubled by the number of complaints Dr. Cheema had received in fewer than 10 years of practice.

Overall, the impression the Committee formed of Dr. Cheema's management of Patient A's reasonable search for a new physician was one of a lack of the appropriate professionalism and ethical behaviour that the College expects of its members.