

**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. Solomon Marc Shapiro (CPSO #58937)
(the Respondent)**

INTRODUCTION

The Complainant contacted the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (the College) to express concern about the Respondent, a specialist in child and adolescent psychiatry.

COMPLAINANT'S CONCERNS

The Complainant is concerned about the Respondent's breach of his confidentiality and privacy. Specifically, the Respondent disclosed the Complainant's name and email address in an email he sent to more than 80 of his patients.

COMMITTEE'S DECISION

A Mental Health Panel of the Committee considered this matter at its meeting of January 14, 2020. The Committee required the Respondent to attend at the College to be cautioned in person with respect to maintaining patient confidentiality. The Committee also required the Respondent to provide a written report explaining his variable scheduling method.

COMMITTEE'S ANALYSIS

The Respondent sends his patients an email message every week asking them to provide their availability for therapy sessions for the upcoming week and their preference for the type of therapy (individual, couple, family or group). The scheduling email the Respondent sent to patients on October 4, 2019, revealed the full names and email addresses of 80 of the Respondent's patients in the address line. More than one hour later, the Respondent sent a second email, using the bcc function to hide the recipients' addresses, advising of the error and asking patients to delete the previous message.

The Respondent acknowledged his error in inadvertently leaving patient names and email addresses visible to all recipients of the October 4 email message, thus disclosing the identities and email addresses of many of his patients to each other. He indicated that he had taken steps to ensure this type of error would not be repeated, including upgrading his email system and purchasing an additional encryption service.

Though it was apparently inadvertent, the Committee considered this error to be a significant breach of patient confidentiality. It appeared to the Committee that the error may have been a consequence of the Respondent's overly casual approach to communication with his patients. In the Committee's view, errors in maintaining patient confidentiality can occur even when safeguards are in place, particularly if physicians do not use a disciplined approach.

The Committee decided that a caution was warranted in light of its concerns.