

SUMMARY

DR. CRAIG KARPILOW (CPSO# 85959)

1. Disposition

On October 19, 2017, the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (“the Committee”) ordered Dr. Karpilow (Family Medicine) to complete a specified continuing education and remediation program (“SCERP”). The SCERP requires Dr. Karpilow to:

- complete one-on-one instruction in professional communications, to be facilitated by the College;
- review the College’s Practice Guide, and discuss this review with his instructor, as mentioned above.

2. Introduction

The College received a complaint from the parent of a six-year-old patient who had concerns about Dr. Karpilow’s care and conduct when he assessed the patient at a walk-in clinic, in relation to skin issues on the patient’s feet. Specifically, the parent was concerned that Dr. Karpilow made inappropriate and insensitive comments about the patient’s weight and eating habits.

Dr. Karpilow provided his account of the interaction, and while his version of events differed from the parent’s in certain respects (for example, he claimed the parent abruptly left the room and demanded treatment for the patient in the waiting room), he did not specifically deny the statements the parent attributed to him about the patient’s weight and diet, and in fact, his notes and response both described the patient as “grossly obese”.

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, under the heading "Policies & Publications."

4. Committee's Analysis

The Committee noted that the manager at the walk-in clinic recalled the parent stating to Dr. Karpilow in the waiting room that he called the patient "fat", and rather than denying the statement, Dr. Karpilow appeared to confirm it by responding, "He is, according to the Paediatric Society Guidelines". The Committee, although it could not know with certainty what Dr. Karpilow said, stated that in its view such a response would be intemperate and inconsiderate, given the presence of the young patient (and the impact the blunt statement may have had on him) and the parent's obvious distress with the discussion on that point.

The Committee stated that while it could not know with certainty what transpired in the examination room, it was clear that the parent was left with a very negative perception of Dr. Karpilow's manner, describing him as rude, unprofessional, and insensitive and abusive in his communications with the patient.

The Committee noted that its concern in this case was heightened by the fact that it had another unrelated complaint before it at the time it considered the present complaint, which raised very similar concerns about Dr. Karpilow's manner and communications with a young patient and her mother; and Dr. Karpilow had a history of prior complaints to the College raising issues about his professionalism and communications. The Committee indicated that while no action was taken on the prior complaints, the fact of the prior complaints in

combination with the two current complaints before the Committee suggested that something in Dr. Karpilow's manner of communication was problematic.

Overall, the Committee was left with the opinion that Dr. Karpilow requires education to assist him in ensuring that he engages in respectful and courteous communications with patients and family members.