

**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. Karen Diane Edstrom (CPSO#66373)
(the Respondent)**

INTRODUCTION

The Complainant's family doctor referred her to the Respondent dermatologist for assessment of a pigmented lesion on her right hip. The Respondent diagnosed the lesion as a seborrheic keratosis (age spot) and offered to excise it for \$200. The Complainant declined. Two months later, while the Complainant was preparing for a right knee replacement surgery, an orthopaedic surgeon noted the lesion on her right hip and requested a plastic surgery consultation. An excision and biopsy of the lesion showed melanoma.

COMPLAINANT'S CONCERNS

The Complainant is concerned about the care and management and unprofessional behaviour by the Respondent in 2018 to 2019. The Respondent:

- a) failed to properly assess, investigate/refer and misdiagnosed a cancerous lesion on her right hip as a mole, resulting in delayed treatment**
- b) was concerned more about remuneration than about the Complainant's welfare.**

COMMITTEE'S DECISION

An Internal Medicine Panel of the Committee considered this matter at its meeting of July 22, 2019. The Committee required the Respondent to attend at the College to be cautioned in person with respect to diagnosis and management of pigmented skin lesions, with special criteria for concern about melanoma.

COMMITTEE'S ANALYSIS

a) Concern that the Respondent failed to properly assess, investigate/refer and misdiagnosed a cancerous lesion on her right hip as a mole, resulting in delayed treatment

- This lesion, which concerned the family physician and was large, pigmented, possibly irregular, at least two colours, with bleeding and recent change would be high risk for melanoma and the Respondent should have biopsied it under OHIP. Missing such diagnosis can delay treatment, with serious consequences.

- The Committee's concern was heightened by the fact that although the Respondent is familiar with the ABCDE criteria for melanoma (Asymmetry, Border irregular, Colour varied, Diameter greater than 6 mm, Evolving or changing), it appears she failed to apply them or misapplied them in this case. This led to a missed diagnosis which had potentially fatal consequences for the patient.
- The Committee wished to discuss the matter with the Respondent in person to ensure she is conversant with all aspects of diagnosis and management of pigmented skin lesions, with special criteria for concern about melanoma.

b) Concern that the Respondent was concerned more about remuneration than about the Complainant's welfare

- The Committee could not be certain how much, if at all, the Respondent's decision was influenced by monetary gain, but the potential for this existed.