

SUMMARY

DR. SOL JULIAN GOLDSTEIN (CPSO# 21457)

1. Disposition

On April 16, 2018, the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (the Committee) ordered psychiatrist Dr. Goldstein to complete a specified continuing education and remediation program (SCERP). The SCERP requires Dr. Goldstein to:

- Practice under the guidance of a Clinical Supervisor acceptable to the College for a duration that allows the Clinical Supervisor to review a total of three custody/access cases from start to finish in which Dr. Goldstein is retained that have elements of parental alienation.
- Attend and successfully complete the following course/conference (and provide the College with a written summary on Workshop 75, “Are There Diagnostic Tests for Parental Alienation”): The Association of Family and Conciliation Courts Annual Conference “Compassionate Family Court Systems: The Role of Trauma-Informed Jurisprudence”: <http://www.afccnet.org/Conferences-Training/AFCC-Conferences/ctl/ViewConference/ConferenceID/103/mid/615>
- Undertake self-directed learning by reviewing the following, and providing a written summary of that review to the College:
 - College policies #4-12, *Medical Records* and #7--12, *Medical Expert: Reports and Testimony*
 - Association of Family and Conciliation Courts: Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluation
- Undergo a reassessment of his practice by an assessor selected by the College approximately one year following the completion of the SCERP.

2. Introduction

An extended family member of a family involved in a family law dispute complained to the College that Dr. Goldstein wrote an incomplete and biased family court report and this led to one of the parents in the family being awarded custody of the children due to “parental alienation”.

Dr. Goldstein responded by providing details of his involvement in writing his report related to the family’s access issues, including that he fulfilled his mandate in an impartial, objective, transparent and professionally appropriate manner. He said he conducted himself with the best interests of the children at heart and fulfilled his duties and responsibilities as an expert witness as required by both the judicial process and College policy.

3. Committee Process

A Mental Health 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.” The Committee also considered a report from an independent opinion (IO) provider who is a child psychiatrist, commenting on Dr. Goldstein’s care in this case.

4. Committee’s Analysis

The IO provider’s opinion included (but was not limited to) the following:

- Dr. Goldstein’s care fell below the standard of what would reasonably be expected of a competent child psychiatrist (the IO provider noted various serious errors of omission and commission).

- Dr. Goldstein's care displayed a lack of skill in terms of omitting key aspects of a psychiatric evaluation, and a lack of knowledge in that he invoked a diagnosis of parental alienation syndrome, which the IO provider stated is not recognized as a disorder and has been heavily criticized by both legal and mental health scholars for lacking scientific validity and reliability.
- Dr. Goldstein made a recommendation for reconnection therapy, which programs are not scientifically supported.
- Dr. Goldstein's clinical practice, behaviour or conduct exposes or is likely to expose his patients to harm or injury (the IO provider noted information from a court judgement that included details of what later happened with respect to the family's children).

Even while recognizing the IO provider and Dr. Goldstein have a difference of opinion about the concept of parental alienation, the Committee shared the IO provider's concerns. The Committee was particularly concerned by difficulties with Dr. Goldstein's unwavering advocacy of parental alienation syndrome and its consequences.

The Committee noted that this was one of several matters it considered that shared some similar themes. In light of the history of concerns received by the College regarding Dr. Goldstein's assessments, the concerns identified and substantiated in this investigation, and the lack of support from the IO provider, the Committee concluded that Dr. Goldstein would benefit from remediation so that any potential risk to parents and families may be best reduced, and hence it ordered the SCERP outlined above.