

## SUMMARY

### DR. AHMED M. SWEDAN (CPSO# 91869)

#### 1. Disposition

On November 1, 2017, the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (the Committee) required family and emergency medicine physician Dr. Swedan to appear before a panel of the Committee to be cautioned with respect to failure to adequately assess a patient at risk of suicide, failure to adequately document the assessment, and failure to use available resources when/if he was not able to devote adequate time to assist the patient himself.

The Committee also ordered Dr. Swedan to complete a specified continuing education and remediation program ("SCERP"). The SCERP requires Dr. Swedan to:

- Practice under the guidance of a Clinical Supervisor acceptable to the College for four months to engage in focused educational sessions to enhance both Dr. Swedan's medical expertise (in management of patients with mental health issues in the ER setting, assessment of suicide risk, use of appropriate resources in managing patients with mental health concerns) and record-keeping (adequacy of records of ER encounters for patients with mental health concerns)
- Undergo a reassessment of his practice by an assessor selected by the College approximately six months following completion of the education program
- Complete the Medical Record Keeping Course through the University of Toronto
- Engage in self-directed learning (including reviewing and preparing a written summary of an article from the publication *Current Psychiatry* with respect to suicide risk assessment).

## **2. Introduction**

The family of a patient complained to the College that Dr. Swedan failed, in a variety of ways, to perform a complete and thorough assessment of the patient or recognize, investigate and treat the patient's chief concern of suicidal thoughts and feelings. After leaving the ER following Dr. Swedan's assessment, instead of going to a rehabilitation facility as Dr. Swedan had ordered, the patient returned to his home where he took his own life.

Dr. Swedan responded that, despite the tragic outcome, he met the standard of care in his management of the patient. He provided an expert opinion in support of the care he provided the patient.

## **3. Committee Process**

As part of this investigation, the Committee retained an Independent Opinion provider ("IO provider") who specializes in emergency medicine. The IO provider reviewed the entire written investigative record and submitted a written report to the Committee.

A General 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.cpsso.on.ca](http://www.cpsso.on.ca), under the heading "Policies & Publications."

## **4. Committee's Analysis**

The Committee agreed with the IO provider that Dr. Swedan did not meet the standard of care in this case. The Committee took into consideration Dr. Swedan's disagreement with the IO provider, but his arguments did not change its view. The Committee noted that although suicides occur no matter how careful clinicians are in their assessments and follow-up, in this

case Dr. Swedan's own assessment of the patient was not adequate and he failed to call upon the resources available to help him (such as a crisis worker, a psychiatric assessment nurse, or a psychiatric consultation) or recognize significant risk factors for suicide in the patient's presentation. The follow-up treatment plan, based on a deficient assessment, was inadequate.

The Committee was very concerned about Dr. Swedan's care and decision-making in this matter.

Given its concern, the Committee decided that a caution and educational program in the form of the SCERP outlined above were the most appropriate way to dispose of this matter.