

**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. Sheridan Reavely-Diaz (CPSO #62947)
(the Respondent)**

INTRODUCTION

The Respondent was the Patient's family physician for several years. Over six months, the Patient saw the Respondent several times, reporting that she felt unwell, and showing symptoms of fatigue, yellowing eyes, weight loss, and extra abdominal weight. The Respondent ordered a computed topography scan, which indicated the Patient had pancreatic cancer. The Patient passed away in hospital a few weeks later. The Complainants, the Patient's relatives, contacted the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (the College) to express concerns about the Respondent's care.

COMPLAINANT'S CONCERNS

The Complainants are concerned that the Respondent failed to conduct any testing or follow-up when the Patient presented with yellowing eyes, weight loss and extra abdominal weight. The Respondent attributed this to the Patient's Crohn's disease and indicated that the abdominal weight was from losing weight by going to the gym.

COMMITTEE'S DECISION

A Panel of the Committee considered this matter at its meeting of October 17, 2019. The Committee required the Respondent to attend at the College to be cautioned in person with respect to professionalism, delayed response to the College, and altered medical records. The Committee also issued advice to the Respondent on conducting and documenting a more comprehensive history, physical examination on patients presenting with non-specific complaints, and considering possible underlying serious illness, including malignancy, in such situations.

COMMITTEE'S ANALYSIS

Re: care of the Patient

The Committee felt that the Respondent's documentation could have been more comprehensive and that she could have considered other possible diagnoses given the Patient's reported symptoms. Overall, in the Committee's view, the Respondent did not think outside of the box with respect to the Patient's symptoms. Though the Committee acknowledged that pancreatic cancer is not an easy diagnosis to make and can be an aggressive illness, the

Committee believed the Respondent should have had a higher suspicion for a malignancy given the Patient's ongoing non-specific symptoms. Given this the Committee issued advice to the Respondent on this aspect of the complaint.

Medical Records

The Committee noted significant discrepancies between the records provided directly by the clinic and those provided by the Respondent. The discrepancies made it challenging for the Committee to review and resolve the complaint. Additionally, the Respondent did not comply with the College's policy, *Medical Records*, to ensure that changes to the record were appropriately dated and initialed. The Committee's concern was heightened by the Respondent's history of medical record keeping issues, and similar discrepancies in the Respondent's medical records in several concurrent cases before the Committee. As a result, the Committee believed it was appropriate to caution the Respondent.

Professionalism and Cooperation with the College

The College investigator had to follow up with the Respondent several times to obtain patient records and a response. The Respondent eventually provided responses in June 2019, almost a year after the College asked her to respond. The Committee was not satisfied with the Respondent's explanation for the delayed response, as this was not the first time the Respondent appeared uncooperative with a College investigation, and her lack of response in this case appeared to be part of an ongoing pattern of poor communication with the College. While the Respondent eventually cooperated with the College, she did not respond to the College's inquiries in a timely manner. In the Committee's view, the Respondent's behaviour was not in keeping with the medical profession's foundational values and policies. The Committee therefore decided to caution the Respondent.