

SUMMARY

DR. ROYA RAHIMPOUR (CPSO# 59223)

1. Disposition

On November 14, 2018, the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (the Committee) required general practitioner Dr. Rahimpour to appear before a panel of the Committee to be cautioned with respect to her communications, medical record keeping and properly ending the physician-patient relationship. The Committee also accepted an undertaking from Dr. Rahimpour.

2. Introduction

The patient, who saw Dr. Rahimpour at a walk-in clinic, complained to the College that she behaved and communicated in an unprofessional manner. The patient complained that Dr. Rahimpour wrote the wrong dates on a sick note and declined to edit them; told the patient she did not believe he was sick even after prescribing antibiotics and ordering x-rays; did not believe the patient when he said he completed the x-rays; told the patient she required him to bring in his antibiotic prescription bottle to show he had taken the medication; declined to see him, and had her staff tell him that she did not have his medical records.

Dr. Rahimpour responded that when she wrote the sick note she did confirm the dates, but understands how her behaviour could have been misinterpreted when the patient asked for the change. When the patient requested antibiotics, she required him to complete the x-ray first to ensure the antibiotics were necessary. The x-ray confirmed they were not needed, and she apologizes if her comments were misinterpreted. She said she had not received the x-ray results and it was not that she did not believe him when he said he went for the x-ray. Patients are instructed to bring in their medication to each appointment. The physician-patient relationship ended in June and so she was not in a position to provide him care when he attended the following month.

3. Committee Process

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.cpso.on.ca, under the heading "Policies & Publications."

4. Committee's Analysis

As a result of this investigation, the Committee had concerns about the Dr. Rahimpour's communications, record-keeping, and the manner in which she ended the physician-patient relationship with this patient.

The Committee is limited to a paper review of information and is unable to know exactly what Dr. Rahimpour said to the patient with regard to the sick note. However, clinic staff provided some support for the patient's version of events, as does information documented in the chart by the Respondent, which suggests the Respondent believed the patient to be malingering even before the incident with the sick note.

Dr. Rahimpour acknowledges, and it was evident from the record, that she did not end the physician-patient relationship according to College policy. Information from Clinic staff supports that the patient was unaware that Dr. Rahimpour had ended the physician-patient relationship, when he attended the Clinic and she refused to see him. Dr. Rahimpour should have sent the patient a letter as per College policy, and placed a copy in the chart; she should not have ended the relationship abruptly as she did here. Dr. Rahimpour should have also documented her

reasons for ending the relationship. In addition, the Committee found Dr. Rahimpour's records to be overly brief.

The Committee's concerns were heightened by the fact that Dr. Rahimpour has had numerous prior College complaints, in which concerns about her communications, professionalism, record-keeping and/or office administration have been raised. In 2015, as a result of a previous complaint, the Committee required her to complete remedial work to improve her communications, record-keeping, and professionalism. Yet in spite of this remediation, since then there have been additional complaints about her to the College raising similar issues.

As set out on the Public Register, the College accepted an undertaking from Dr. Rahimpour to practice under the guidance of clinical supervisor for six months; to engage in professional education in medical record-keeping, ending the physician-patient relationship, communications, and the values and principles of medical practice; and to be re-assessed by an assessor selected by the College following the supervision. In addition to accepting Dr. Rahimpour's undertaking, the Committee has determined that the appropriate disposition is to require Dr. Rahimpour to attend at the College to be cautioned in this matter. The Committee wishes to meet with her in person to provide direction to her with regard to her communications, record-keeping, and termination of care in this case, particularly in light of this Committee's previous orders to remediate.