

**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. Neda Amani (CPSO #72418)  
(the Respondent)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Complainant contacted the College with concerns that the Respondent, who is a family physician, was spreading medically harmful misinformation regarding COVID-19. The Complainant contacted the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (the College) to express concerns about the Respondent's conduct.

## **COMPLAINANT'S CONCERNS**

**The Complainant is concerned that the Respondent, through her participation in a video entitled, "Canadian Doctors Speak Out: Top Reasons Not to be Afraid of COVID" (available on several Internet websites and/or social media platforms), has been spreading medically harmful misinformation about COVID-19, which goes against the efforts being made by Public Health officials to control the pandemic and keep Canadians safe, and which may cause individuals to disregard the medical guidance and place themselves at risk.**

## **COMMITTEE'S DECISION**

A General Panel of the Committee considered this matter at its meeting of April 11, 2022. The Committee required the Respondent to appear before a Panel of the Committee to be cautioned to refrain from being involved in the production of publications that provide unbalanced medical information and/or medical misinformation to the public, particularly in the context of a public health emergency.

## **COMMITTEE'S ANALYSIS**

As part of this investigation, the Committee retained an independent Assessor who specializes in public health and preventative medicine. The Assessor opined that the Respondent's participation and specific comments she made in the "Canadian Doctor's Speak Out" video did not meet the standard of practice, as the Respondent failed to communicate the full picture of and present balanced information about the risks of COVID-19 in children; undermined the advice of public health expert colleagues and government officials tasked with leading the response and directing the public on how to keep safe; and acted in a way that could put the public's health at risk, therefore demonstrating disruptive behaviour.

The Assessor was of the opinion that the Respondent displayed a lack of knowledge, skill and judgment, and that the Respondent's behaviour is likely to expose the public to harm given that physicians such as herself are one of the most trusted sources of information about COVID-19. Thus, the Respondent's unbalanced comments could well result in people misperceiving the risk and behaving in ways that would increase their chance of exposure to COVID-19.

The Committee agrees with the Assessor's conclusions as set out above. The Respondent's contribution to the video is confined to the topic of children and COVID-19. The Committee noted that the comments on their own may not amount to medical misinformation. However, the information the Respondent provided was unbalanced and the Committee was concerned about the forum in which she chose to make her comments, as others involved in the video provided information that undermines public health measures. The Committee was also concerned with the timing of the Respondent's message, which occurred in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Physicians hold a unique position of trust with the public and have a special professional responsibility during a public health emergency. As a physician, the Respondent has a responsibility to present balanced information in a manner that ultimately does not undermine public health measures. When offering opinions, physicians must be guided by the law, regulatory standards, and the code of ethics and professional conduct. The information shared must not be misleading or deceptive and must be supported by available evidence and science. Physicians must not make comments or provide advice that encourages the public to act contrary to public health orders and recommendations.

The Committee agrees with the Assessor that the Respondent's behaviour is likely to expose the public to harm given that physicians are one of the most trusted sources of information about COVID-19.

The Respondent has a history of prior College complaints and/or investigations, including another recent case involving the COVID-19 pandemic and the Committee decided to caution the Respondent with respect to her failure to comply with COVID-19 related Directive #3, issued by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health, and with the visitor policy of a long term care facility that she was visiting in October 2020, and her failure to cooperate with the College in the investigation. The Respondent's prior disruptive behaviour in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic heightened the Committee's concerns.