

**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. Zoltan Peter Rona (CPSO #30224)  
(the Respondent)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The College received information raising concerns about the Respondent's prescribing of natural health products to a patient through a company, TriStar Naturals, with labelling on the products containing the Respondent's name and image. Subsequently, the Committee approved the Registrar's appointment of investigators to conduct a broad review of the Respondent's practice.

## **COMMITTEE'S DECISION**

A General Panel of the Committee considered this matter at its meeting of April 21, 2021. The Committee required the Respondent to appear before a panel of the Committee to be cautioned in person with respect to breach of the Advertising and Conflict of Interest regulations. The Committee also requested that the Respondent provide a written report based on his review of these regulations. In addition, the Committee issued advice to the Respondent regarding: 1) the importance of documenting consent for specific complementary and alternative medicine treatments; and 2) the importance of follow-up care and documentation.

## **COMMITTEE'S ANALYSIS**

As part of this investigation, the Registrar appointed an independent Assessor to review the chart of the patient in question, interview the Respondent, and submit a written report to the Committee. The Assessor determined that the Respondent met the standard of practice of the profession with respect to providing complementary and alternative medicine to the patient consistent with the College's policy, *Complementary/Alternative Medicine* (CAM policy). The Assessor indicated however that the Respondent demonstrated a lack of judgement in aspects of his prescribing of desiccated thyroid extract (DTE) to the patient who had borderline hypothyroidism.

### **Clinical Care Issues**

The Committee agreed with the Assessor that in general the Respondent followed most elements of the CAM policy.

The Assessor accepted that the Respondent's treatment of the patient with DTE was reasonable, but noted that the Respondent should have documented his discussion with

the patient about how his treatment would deviate from conventional medicine. The Assessor also noted that close and careful monitoring of the patient was required due to the age of the patient and because the patient fell into the “grey zone” regarding initiating treatment. The Assessor noted that there was a lack of documentation in the record of the patient’s response to treatment or of any screening for symptoms of hyperthyroidism. The Assessor also indicated that the patient’s levels of TSH were below the desired target, which should have resulted in a decreased dosage of DTE. The Committee agreed with the Assessor on these points and for this reason issued advice.

### **Advertising and Conflict of Interest Issues**

The Committee noted that:

- The Respondent acknowledged that his name and image appeared on TriStar Naturals products at the time he provided care to the patient.
- The Respondent has since had his name and image removed from the product labels.
- The Respondent acknowledged that he is a financial stakeholder in the company and received 3 percent of all sales.
- The Respondent maintained that his patients are made aware of all suppliers who manufacture similar products.

The Committee noted that the inclusion of the Respondent’s name and image on the TriStar Naturals products is a breach of section 6(4) of O.Reg. 114/94 made under the *Medicine Act, 1991*, Part II: Advertising [the Advertising regulation] which states that no member of the College shall cause or permit his or her name to appear in any communication offering a product or service to the public or otherwise cause or permit himself or herself to be associated with the advertising or promotion of any product or service.

The Committee further noted that the inclusion of the TriStar Naturals website on the prescription the Respondent wrote the patient for DTE is a breach of section 16(a) of O.Reg. 114/94, Part IV: Conflicts of Interest, which states that it is a conflict of interest for any member to receive any direct or indirect benefit from a supplier to whom the member refers his or her patients or their specimens or a supplier who sells or otherwise supplies any medical goods or services to the patients of the member. The Committee noted that it was reasonable to assume that the Respondent “referred” the

patient to TriStar Naturals in pointing the patient to the website on the prescription itself, a website that, furthermore, at the time included the Respondent's name and image.

Given the serious nature of the breaches of regulation, the Committee determined that it would be appropriate to caution the Respondent and request that he provide a written report to the Committee in advance of his appearance to be cautioned.