



Bulletin

April 2012

This Bulletin is forwarded to every medical practitioner in the province. Decisions of the College on matters of standards, amendments to Regulations, guidelines, etc., are published in Bulletins. The College, therefore, assumes that a practitioner should be aware of these matters.

Council Update

At its meeting on 23 March 2012, Council considered the following matters.

COMPLAINTS

A *Counsel* is advice as to how to improve the physician's conduct or practice.

A *Caution* is intended to express the dissatisfaction of the Committee and to forewarn the physician that if the conduct recurs, more serious disciplinary action may be considered.

A *Censure* is the expression of strong disapproval or harsh criticism.

A complaint was received from Atlantic Provinces Medical Peer Review that a physician had improperly declined to accept an assessment. The ostensible reason was that the physician felt the costs involved should be borne by the Peer Review office. After several delays, and the threat of suspension, the assessment was completed without incident. The physician never actually provided an explanation to the College. As a consequence, the Committee issued a *Censure* for failing to do so.

A patient saw a surgeon for a longstanding issue. The surgeon did not feel any surgical intervention was necessary. The patient had a number of questions which, she alleged, were unanswered. She also requested completion of certain disability forms, which the surgeon suggested were of insufficient importance to deal with quickly. The Committee felt there were a number of shortcomings in the communication provided by the

surgeon. Even if no specific therapy could be offered, the patient was entitled to a reasonable explanation. As a consequence, the Committee issued a *Caution* regarding such.

A patient was under treatment at a local hospital. Due to a number of unsatisfactory aspects of her care there, she chose to discharge herself. Without further discussion, her physician subsequently advised her that she was discharged from the practice. The reason offered was that the patient had lost confidence in both the physician and the local hospital. The Committee felt that this patient was improperly discharged from the practice and that the physician had failed to follow appropriate guidelines, generally requiring a discussion with the patient of any outstanding issues prior to taking action. The Committee felt that a *Counsel* to the physician was an appropriate response.

Officers and Councillors 2011-2012

President - Dr. François Guinard, Edmundston
VP - Dr. Mark Whalen, Campbellton

Registrar - Dr. Ed Schollenberg

Dr. Eric J.Y. Basque, Pointe-des-Robichaud

Dr. Stephen R. Bent, Miramichi

Dr. Zeljko Bolesnikov, Fredericton

Dr. Santo Filice, Moncton

Dr. Robert J. Fisher, Hampton

Dr. Kathleen L. Keith, Saint John

Mr. Paul Leger, Rothesay

Ms. Ruth Lyons, Tide Head

Dr. Lachelle Nofall, Fredericton

Ms. Patricia I. O'Dell, Riverview

Dr. Teréz Rétfalvi (PhD), Moncton

Dr. Barbara M. Ross, Moncton

Dr. Susan E. Skanes, Dieppe

Dr. Lisa Jean Sutherland, Rothesay

A patient complained that there had been an improperly delayed diagnosis of a significant skin lesion. In response, the physician noted that the presentation of the lesion, which turned out to be a squamous cell carcinoma, was extremely unusual. The Committee agreed and could find no fault with the care provided.

A patient suffered a work injury and developed persistent pain. She saw a number of specialists who could not determine a specific cause and felt no intervention was appropriate. She subsequently saw another consultant and requested further investigation. In denying such, the physician implied that it would be a waste of resources to investigate the patient further. The patient subsequently underwent further investigation through another physician and was determined to have a significant injury for which surgery was possible.

