

CENSURE: IC6034

DR. IRFAN RAZA

On December 15, 2021, in accordance with Subsection 102(2)(d) of *The Regulated Health Professions Act*, the Investigation Committee censured Dr. Raza for having conducted himself in an unprofessional manner when he communicated with one office staff member, both in the presence and absence of patients, in a disrespectful and demeaning manner, including the use of insulting language, thereby creating a hostile environment for both the staff member and the patients who witnessed these occurrences.

Censure creates a disciplinary record which may be considered in the future by the Investigation Committee or an Inquiry Panel when determining the action to be taken following an investigation or hearing.

I. PREAMBLE

Quality medical care frequently requires communication and cooperation with colleagues and co-workers, in respect to some of whom members may be in a position of authority. As such, effective and professional communication skills are an expectation of the profession. Members are expected to cultivate collaborative and respectful relationships with other health care professions in all areas of medicine and with other colleagues and partners in health care. In communicating with colleagues, which includes office personnel, members are expected to treat them with dignity and as persons worthy of respect. Physicians are also expected to assume responsibility for their personal actions and behaviours as well as espouse behaviours that contribute to a positive training and practice culture.

Physicians must also cultivate an atmosphere that is safe for patients. Witnessing acts of verbal aggression by their physician can have significant negative impact on patients' wellbeing. Patients must at all times feel they are able to speak freely about their concerns and not fear disclosing information or asking questions of their physician.

II. THE RELEVANT FACTS ARE:

The Committee assessed the facts as follows:

1. On June 1, 2017, Dr. Raza became the sole practitioner at the Isabel Medical Centre (the "Clinic") and worked in the Clinic from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, whereas X worked in the clinic from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

2. X had worked at the Clinic as an office assistant/receptionist for many years with the Clinic's previous physician, and she continued on in that capacity when Dr. Raza took over the practice. X took care of all administrative matters, including accepting deliveries, booking patients, and submitting billings.
3. Between June 1, 2017 and June 30, 2021, Dr. Raza communicated with X in the Clinic using inappropriate language which included insults and profanity.
4. In 2018, a patient who had witnessed Dr. Raza's behavior towards X counselled her to make notes of incidents, which she did on four occasions at the time they occurred or shortly thereafter on post-it notes. X alleges that there were many other incidents that she did not write down as she lost count due to how often it happened.
5. X produced her notes to the CPSM investigator upon request and they are as follows:
 - a. Feb 27, 2018 3:30 — "he press hard with his hand on my forehead. (No witness)"
 - b. March 9, 2018 12:30 — "I ask him about a price of the form he said I told you million time you fucking ass". No witness — lady outside. (*name redacted*) (Pt — don't want if see heard).
 - c. June 20, 2018 — "in the afternoon he is upset with me and called `you [*expletive*]' told me few times."
 - d. June 20, 2018 — "I have mixed emotion of I have to tell him I want to resign. But when he got mad again he call me `No you [*expletive*] Go home I will send your cheque".
6. X provided the names of patients who could potentially corroborate some of these incidents. The investigator was able to contact and obtain information from two patients — Patient Y and Patient Z.
7. Patient Y described an incident where she says that she was in the waiting room for hours. When Dr. Raza arrived at the clinic, X began to escort her to one of the examination rooms but Dr. Raza intervened and asked X why Patient Y was being put into the room first. Patient Y witnessed Dr. Raza say to X that she was lazy and did nothing, also calling her "stupid and dumb". Y thought other patients in the waiting room could hear Dr. Raza when making these comments to X. She defended X, saying that she was just doing her job and that Dr. Raza should go easy on her. As a result of this incident, Y is no longer Dr. Raza's patient.

8. Patient Z, indicated that she had witnessed Dr. Raza being very rude and that in her view he "talked down" to X and was generally disrespectful. In one of these instances, Dr. Raza made X cry by calling her stupid in front of patients in the Clinic.
 9. On June 21st, 2021, the Clinic received a Moderna vaccine delivery. X made appointments for patients to receive a second dose of COVID-19 vaccine when Dr. Raza understood that she would be making appointments for first doses. Dr. Raza was upset that X had acted contrary to instructions for booking COVID-19 vaccines he previously provided to her.
 10. Dr. Raza asked X, "Did I tell you to book for a second vaccine?" X apologized for her mistake and left the room to return to her desk. X says that he then followed X to her desk and directed a barrage of insults and profanities at X for her actions.
 11. X has not returned to work for Dr. Raza since her departure on June 30, 2021 as she says that the work environment was too stressful.
 12. In Dr. Raza's communications with CPSM, he admitted that he was upset at X for the mistake relating to the vaccine appointments although he denied yelling at her or using the language she describes.
 13. The Committee considered these concerns in the context of multiple complaints having been made to CPSM since 2014 in relation to Dr. Raza's communication skills, which have resulted in criticism of his conduct as well as him having taken remedial education as recently as 2018.
- III. ON THESE FACTS, THE INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE RECORDS ITS DISAPPROVAL OF DR. RAZA'S CONDUCT IN:**
14. Dr. Raza failed to meet expected ethical standards of the profession by communicating with a member of his staff in an inappropriate and demeaning fashion, at times in the presence of patients. These comments included the use of insulting and inappropriate language.
 15. The Investigation Committee found Dr. Raza's approach to and interactions with X to be unacceptable, and particularly aggravating given that he was in a position of authority over X. Dr. Raza's conduct constituted a breach of the expected

standard of professionalism and a contravention of the Code of Ethics. It further found Dr. Raza's disregard for the damage this would cause to his professional relationship, as well as the relationships with his patients who witnessed these occurrences, to be troubling.

IV. ORDERS

1. The Investigation Committee directed, pursuant to subsection 104(2) of the RHPA, that this censure and a description of the circumstances that led to the censure be made available to the public.
2. Dr. Raza paid the costs of the investigation in the amount of \$3450.00.