



STATEMENT FROM THE REGISTRAR

Dr. Sonny S. Dhalla Suspension

Background

After a lengthy and complex investigation that commenced in 2016, this matter was referred to The College of Physicians and Surgeons (CPSM) Inquiry Committee in December 2018.

A seven-day hearing was held in September 2019, following which a Panel of the Inquiry Committee of CPSM found Dr. Sonny S. Dhalla guilty of committing acts of professional misconduct and that he breached his ethical duty to provide appropriate assistance to a patient requiring urgent medical care. The Panel's findings, dated May 6, 2020, can be found [here](#).

The patient is referred to as Patient Y.

Summary

Dr. Dhalla followed Patient Y in hospital from November 5 to 12, 2015. Patient Y had been admitted for a procedure to address an abnormality of their stomach. A serious complication occurred during the procedure and Patient Y required admission to the intensive care unit and a subsequent operation. Unfortunately, there was significant bleeding after that operation and the bleeding continued over several days. The Panel found that Dr. Dhalla failed to address this bleeding properly. On the morning of November 12, Dr. Dhalla was asked by an ICU physician to help with Patient Y. There was an immediate need for surgery to find and correct the source of the bleeding. Dr. Dhalla responded with what the Panel found to be inappropriate and ineffective advice. The Panel described Dr. Dhalla's response as, *"indicative of a reluctance to operate without valid reasons rather than a genuine attempt to care for a seriously ill patient."* Despite remaining responsible for Patient Y, who had life-threatening bleeding, Dr. Dhalla left the ICU to do elective surgery for another patient that was expected to take more than six hours. The Panel found his deficiency and inaction to be serious and deeply troubling.

Consequences

Dr. Dhalla was reprimanded and to be suspended for two months. The Penalty decision, dated November 21, 2020, can be found at [here](#). View the Panel's decision to order costs in the amount of \$85,000.00 at [here](#).

Appeal

Dr. Dhalla appealed the portion of the Penalty decision to suspend his license for two months and the costs decision.

While the appeal was ongoing, the Manitoba Court of Appeal ordered a stay of the reprimand and suspension.

The Court dismissed Dr. Dhalla's appeal of the Panel's suspension and costs Orders on January 25, 2022. View the decision [here](#). As a result of the dismissal, the stay was lifted respecting the suspension; the suspension will commence on February 25, 2022.

Statement from the Registrar

Patients must trust that their surgeon will continue to provide care when complications occur in the context of a procedure or operation they perform, or alternatively, transfer care to another surgeon. CPSM believes this decision sends a strong message that abdication of that responsibility will not be tolerated.

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Registrar/CEO