



January 28, 2010

Dr. Lawrence A. Demco disciplined by College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta

Calgary specialist Dr. Lawrence Demco has agreed to an undertaking with the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta to certain practice conditions and to pay the costs of the College's investigation.

The following disciplinary agreement will be published in the February 2010 edition of the CPSA newsletter, *The Messenger*, and will be posted immediately on the College website.

Between 2006 and 2008, the College received three complaints related to Dr. Lawrence Demco of Calgary. The complaints concerned the obstetrical and gynecological care provided to a number of patients.

These complaints were thoroughly investigated by the College, including seeking expert opinion from independent specialists in obstetrics and gynecology. During the investigation, concerns about the care Dr. Demco provided to these patients were identified. The majority of concerns were about obstetrical care close to or at the time of delivery.

Based on the findings of the investigation, Dr. Demco was charged with unbecoming conduct and a disciplinary hearing was scheduled. Shortly before the hearing, Dr. Demco acknowledged the following allegations were true:

1. That he failed to create an adequate treatment record on four patients (three obstetrical and one gynecological) between 2003 and 2006.
2. That he inappropriately induced labor in patient A on May 4, 2005.
3. That he failed to provide adequate care to pregnant patient B on June 13, 2005.
4. That he failed to attend pregnant patient B in a timely fashion on June 14, 2005.
5. That he inappropriately disregarded the concerns of a labor and delivery nurse regarding the abnormal fetal heart rate tracing of the unborn child of patient C on February 6, 2006.
6. That he failed to provide adequate care to patient D, a patient in labor, on November 13, 2006.
7. That he failed to appreciate the request of patient E to have her mother present as a chaperone during a gynecological examination on January 31, 2008.
8. That he conducted a pelvic examination on patient E on January 31, 2008 that was unnecessarily distressing to patient E.

As a result of the admitted charges, Dr. Demco agreed to the following undertaking with the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta:

1. Dr. Demco will close his own medical office by no later than December 31, 2009, and may from January 1, 2010 onward provide locum office coverage for other obstetricians and gynecologists.
2. Dr. Demco agrees that his registration with the College will be subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Unless authorized by the Registrar in writing, Dr. Demco will not see or treat any pregnant patient who is greater than thirty two (32) weeks gestation,

- b. Dr. Demco will only practise with a physician or group of physicians who will provide coverage to Dr. Demco's patients requiring acute obstetrical care prior to thirty two (32) weeks gestation,
 - c. Dr. Demco will not apply for or hold obstetrical privileges at any hospital in Alberta,
 - d. Dr. Demco will designate a physician or group of physicians and inform the health region of the identity of those physicians who will provide coverage after hours and when Dr. Demco is not available to see his surgical patients following discharge, and,
 - e. Dr. Demco will practise in an office practice setting acceptable to the Registrar, and keep the Registrar advised in a prompt manner regarding any changes to his practice arrangement.
3. Any obstetrical patients seen by Dr. Demco in his office practice will be transferred to another physician at no later than thirty two (32) weeks gestation for continued care and the delivery of the unborn child.
 4. Dr. Demco will have a chaperone for all patient visits involving sensitive examinations.

In addition, Dr. Demco paid for the costs of the College's investigation in the amount of \$32,122.17; provided patient E with an apology; and attended a boundaries course put on by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia.

Given Dr. Demco's acknowledgement that the charges against him are true and the nature and scope of his undertaking with the College, the Investigation Chairman determined it was unnecessary to refer this matter to a hearing.

The complainants were given 30 days to appeal the Investigation Chairman's decision to the Appeal Committee of the Council. The appeal period expired on December 31, 2009.

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The College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta licenses physicians, develops and administers standards of practice and conduct, and investigates/resolves physician-related complaints. We also provide leadership and direction on health and related policy issues such as access to services, quality improvement, patient safety and privacy.

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