

Ethics 101 – Responding to the College

Regarding the delay in responding to the College - I would be obliged to tell her this was a most serious mistake and I doubt if there can be a satisfactory excuse!

I would also have to advise her that she had a responsibility to reply to the insurance company in a reasonable time frame. Not to respond to a patient's request for information to be provided to a potential insurer could cause harm for the patient and also create a liability for the physician.

I showed my son, who is a senior marketing consultant for a major Canadian Insurance agency the "ethics 101 case". He told me that getting replies from physicians in a timely fashion is a major problem for the industry. They often take weeks and sometimes months with multiple reminders before the application for insurance can be completed.

He sent me the [attached .pdf](#)* which indicates that as well as inconveniencing the patient, such delays can cause a significant liability for the physician. This is a Quebec case and I don't know if local or national Codes of Ethics specifically refer to the obligation to respond within 30 days or if there is a prohibition against interfering in the personal affairs not related to health.

In defence of my ignorance of current codes, I am a long retired pathologist. I was involved in our Medical Advisory Committee for many years and I remember a continuing problem with doctors not completing their records and in particular delays in sending out a discharge report. So perhaps as a profession we need to be reminded that "the job is not finished until the paper work is done"

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