

**INQUIRY COMMITTEE
RECORD OF DECISION**

File Reference: DH1702

ELEMENTS OF COMPLAINT

On May 27, 2017, the College received a complaint alleging that a Registrant had engaged in unprofessional communications with the Complainant and had provided substandard dental hygiene services which caused considerable post-treatment pain.

The CDHBC Inquiry Committee initiated an investigation under s. 33(1) of the *Health Professions Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 183 (the "Act") and appointed an inspector to assist with the investigation.

On June 5, 2017, the CDHBC Registrar notified the Registrant of the investigation and requested the Registrant's response to the investigation, in accordance with s. 33(5) of the Act.

On June 20, 2017, the College received the Registrant's written response to the investigation. The Registrant provided his/her recollection of the dental hygiene appointment. The Registrant confirmed that the Complainant experienced sensitivity and discomfort during the dental hygiene appointment. As a consequence, s/he used a topical anesthetic gel and changed to hand scaling.

On July 6, 2017, the College received a response from the Complainant in which s/he stated that s/he had requested the topical anesthetic gel shortly after the dental hygiene appointment began because the Registrant was too rough.

On August 3, 2017, the College received a report from the inspector, a copy of which was provided to the Complainant and the Registrant for response. The inspector's report revealed that: (a) the Complainant reiterated his/her allegations regarding pain during and after the dental hygiene treatment, as well as his/her concerns about the Registrant's unprofessional communication and poor technique during the dental hygiene appointment; (b) the Registrant and Complainant had different recollections of the events from the dental hygiene appointment; and (c) the Registrant acknowledged that the Complainant experienced discomfort and sensitivity during the dental hygiene appointment and advised that s/he switched to hand scaling and used lighter pressure, as well as applying topical anesthetic gel at the start of the appointment to reduce the Complainant's discomfort.

COMMITTEE DECISION

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Inquiry Committee concluded that the Registrant provided an appropriate standard of care which was properly documented in the clinical record recognizing that some patients experience greater sensitivity than others even with proper dental hygiene techniques; however, the Inquiry Committee was concerned that the Registrant did not take sufficient care to ensure that his/her interpersonal communications with the Complainant were sufficiently sensitive to the patient's needs.

In accordance with section 33(6)(c) of the Act, the Inquiry Committee determined that this was an appropriate case to seek a consent order to ensure that the Registrant takes steps to enhance his/her professional interpersonal communication with patients. The Registrant agreed to give his/her undertaking to provide a letter of apology to the Complainant and complete a course on professional interpersonal communications for health professionals within one year, at his/her own cost.

RELEVANT PROVISION OF ACT, REGULATION OR BYLAWS

Act, sections 33(1); 33(5); 33(6)(c)

STATUS: Closed.