

THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

The College of Physicians and Surgeons was established in 1886 as part of the *Medical Practitioners Act* and is the governing body for doctors in BC. Its members are doctors registered in the province to practice medicine, surgery and midwifery. The purpose of the College is to protect the public and to guide the doctors of BC using rules found in the *Medical Practitioners Act*. It is run by a group of 10 elected and 5 appointed (by the Lieutenant Governor) members called the Council. Members of the public also serve on the Council and on the Council's different committees. The Council works to maintain the standards of the profession, to establish rules of professional behavior for its members, to decide the qualifications needed for registration and licensing, and to evaluate complaints and concerns about the quality of care given by physicians. The Council can discipline its members by criticizing, fining, or taking away their license to practice. As a member of the public, you can use the College for doctor referrals, for information, and to voice complaints or concerns.

Mailing Address:

College of Physicians and Surgeons
1807 W. 10th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6J 2A9

Phone Number:

(604) 733-7758

Outside the Lower Mainland:

1-800-461-3008

Sexual Complaints Hotline:

1-800-661-9701

Website:

www.cpsbc.ca

The Complaint Process:

To make a complaint, you can call any of the above numbers, or write to the College at their mailing address. Address your letter to the Registrar and include: your name, address, and phone number; the name and address of the doctor you are complaining about; the nature of your complaint as clearly and completely as possible; and your permission to send a copy of your complaint to the doctor in question. In special cases the College will help you write a letter of complaint if you ask for their help.

When a complaint is received, the College, with your permission, shares your complaint with the doctor and asks him/her to respond. The College then tells you how the doctor responded. The College may get in touch with people or doctors whom they think might be helpful, and they

may look at hospital records if you were given hospital care. Sometimes the complainant (person complaining) is satisfied with the doctor's response and that is the end of it. If this is not the case then an investigation may continue. Some complaints are dealt with by the College Staff, and others are passed on to one of the committees of the College. The College has many committees which handle different areas of concern: the Quality of Medical Performance Committee, the Preliminary Review Committee, the Sexual Misconduct Review Committee, and the Ethical Standards and Conduct Review Committee. In some cases the Executive Committee (President, Vice President, and Treasurer) also helps with the investigation.

If a complaint is found to be valid a few things can happen. A committee can: criticize the doctor and make suggestions for change in his future practice; reprimand the doctor; ask the College to speak to the members about the issues around the complaint so that it doesn't happen again; ask the Council to fine the doctor. In any case, a complainant will always receive a letter from the College explaining what happened and how the complaint was dealt with.