A Regina doctor is appealing the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan's decision to revoke his medical licence and make him pay the costs of disciplinary proceedings. A notice of appeal, prepared by lawyer Aaron Fox, was filed Thursday with Court of Queen's Bench on behalf of Dr. Amjad Ali, whose licence was revoked by the college's council on June 21.

Ali, who owns the Northgate Medi-Clinic in Regina, was ordered to pay the college nearly $49,000 in legal costs for the time the regulatory body spent investigating and prosecuting cases against him.

The college's council has not yet issued its reasons for the penalty imposed. But in the listed grounds for appeal, Fox contends the council erred in failing to consider the circumstances of the offence. Further grounds may come once the reasons are released, the notice states. Ali's case was before the college council for a penalty hearing after he was found guilty of three counts of professional misconduct involving interactions with female patients in 2011.

In one instance, Ali remained in a room while a female patient undressed and dressed. The patient said that while she was in his office, Ali started a conversation about having an affair with her, and tried to kiss her.

Another time, he told a patient she could be his lover and come back to his office after hours, and he would suck on her breasts.

A third patient complained to the college that Ali asked her invasive questions about her personal life that had no relevance to the medical treatment she was seeking to alleviate back pain.

The 2011 cases were not Ali's first encounters with the college's disciplinary committee.

In 2004, he was disciplined for sexual impropriety in his dealings with two female patients in 2003. His licence was suspended for three months, and he had to pay $20,000 for the college's legal costs and take a course about appropriate boundaries between doctors and patients.

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College revokes disgraced doctor’s licence

A Regina family doctor ran out of chances Friday when the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan’s council revoked his medical licence.

Dr. Amjad Ali, 63, who owns the Northgate Medi-Clinic in Regina, must also pay the college nearly $49,000 in legal costs for the time the regulatory body spent investigating and prosecuting cases against him.

“I’m very disappointed. That’s all I would say,” Ali’s lawyer Aaron Fox said as he and the doctor made a hasty exit from the Saskatoon Club Friday afternoon.

Ali’s case was before the college council for a penalty hearing after he was found guilty in three cases of professional misconduct involving interactions with female patients in 2011.

One longtime patient said that while she was in his office, Ali started a conversation about having an affair with her, and tried to kiss her.

He told another patient she could come back to his office after hours and he would suck on her breasts.

A third patient who complained to the college had gone to Ali’s clinic with back pain. Ali asked her invasive questions about her personal life that had no medical relevance, according to the college’s lawyer, Bryan Salte.

Two of the women submitted victim impact statements. The woman who was asked to return to Ali’s office after hours said the incident interfered with her ability to work, because she couldn’t sleep or eat. She suffered from anxiety, lost self-esteem, and has “absolutely no trust in doctors now” she wrote.

The back pain patient said the day she saw Dr. Ali “represents the day I lost trust in Saskatchewan doctors.”

She now avoids routine checkups, and didn’t keep an appointment with a specialist to investigate an abnormality her family doctor found. The incident affects her work as an apprentice embalmer, as she fears she will one day have to see Dr. Ali to get a death certificate signed. She doesn’t want to live in fear of doctors anymore, her statement said.

These cases were not Ali’s first time running afoul of the college. In 2004, a college disciplinary committee found him guilty of sexual impropriety in his dealings with two female patients in 2003. His licence was suspended for three months, and he had to pay $20,000 for the college’s legal costs and take a course about appropriate boundaries between doctors and patients.

In November 2011, a disciplinary committee found him guilty of falsifying a document after he billed the provincial government’s medical services branch for nearly $4,600 for another doctor’s work.

In March 2012, a committee found him guilty of professional misconduct for adding false notations to an eight-year-old girl’s chart following a 2010 confrontation with her mother.

“Dr. Ali is not someone who’s willing to accept the ethics of the medical profession,” Salte said Friday. He pointed to the doctor crossing boundaries with patients years after the college had ordered him to take the boundaries course.

Fox spent nearly an hour trying to convince the council to give Ali another chance. He attributed Ali’s “bizarre” behaviour to medical problems such as low blood sugar and a psychiatrist’s diagnosis of a mood disorder.

Ali is now on medication for the mood disorder and will start counselling soon, Fox said. Respecting patients’ boundaries won’t be a problem once his mood disorder is under control, Fox argued, adding Ali is beginning to have more insight into his own temperament.

Fox also outlined several conditions under which Ali was willing to practice — restricting himself to 40 patients a day, six days a week to avoid overwork; subjecting himself to random inspections by the college; seeing only patients age 50 and older; and having female patients sign a form proving a chaperone was present.

In the end, the council agreed with Salte’s statement that the medical evidence fell “far short” of explaining Ali’s behaviour, and “far, far short that dealing with a medical condition will solve the problem.”

Ali was suspended from practising medicine while awaiting the hearing’s outcome. Although he used a legal loophole to see some patients without getting paid, the provincial government closed that loophole, shutting the Northgate clinic’s doors in May.
A Regina doctor continues to see patients despite being suspended from practising medicine by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan.

Dr. Amjad Ali's status as a physician is now up for debate by the college and the Ministry of Health after a Regina resident raised concerns about Ali's standing.

Ken Grey was looking for a family physician and saw a notice that a medical clinic in the Northgate Mall was accepting new patients. When Grey went to the clinic on Wednesday, he was met by Ali.

"He told me that he was currently under suspension," said Grey, who decided to stay.

In December, a college disciplinary committee found Ali guilty of inappropriate conduct and sexual impropriety in his dealings with three female patients in 2011. He also pleaded guilty to examining a female patient without a chaperone present - a condition the college had earlier placed on his practice.

Ali has been found to have acted unprofessionally in seven separate incidents, including two other sexually improper interactions with patients in 2004.

The council of the college voted on Jan. 18 to suspend Ali's licence to practise medicine until March 23, when a penalty hearing was to take place. At that hearing, Ali asked for an adjournment so he could present further medical evidence at a June council meeting. The adjournment was granted on the condition that he remain suspended until June.

"One of the issues which Dr. Ali has raised is, can he assist patients during the period of his suspension if he doesn't charge anybody - he doesn't charge the patient, he doesn't charge (the government's Medical Services Branch)?" said Bryan Salte, the college's associate registrar and legal counsel.

Because Ali didn't receive payment for his services and indicated that he was suspended to Grey, he wasn't misrepresenting his credentials, Salte said.

"We're told that he is not charging anybody for any of this," Salte said. "If we receive different information, it would obviously have an impact on our perspective. At the moment, that is what we've been told and that falls within the permissible range of things that can be done."

Salte said the college has discussed with the government its concern about tying money to the practice of medicine.

"I use the example sometimes that I can do open heart surgery on you without committing an offence under the Medical Profession Act as long as I don't charge you for it, which strikes me as being a bit strange, but nonetheless that's the way it's defined in our legislation," Salte said.

The Ministry of Health does not support suspended doctors seeing patients, said Brad Havervold, executive director of the ministry's workforce planning branch.

"This is a highly irregular practice," he said. "It's not been anything that I have seen by physicians in the past who have been suspended or even who have been under investigation by the college," said Havervold.

When contacted Thursday, Ali confirmed that he did not charge Grey or any other patients for office visits.

"The college has set down their rules and I'm following the rules," Ali said.

He said he plans to continue to see patients because he knows there is a physician shortage.

"I've had eight months of suspension already, no income and I'm almost bankrupt now, but I still keep the door open, pay the secretary and make sure the patients are looked after," he said.

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Gov’t moves to close suspended doctor loophole

BY JANET FRENCH, THE STARPHOENIX   MAY 3, 2013

Health Minister Dustin Duncan says the provincial government will move quickly to close a loophole that allows a suspended Regina doctor to continue seeing patients, as long as he isn’t getting paid.

Regina family Dr. Amjad Ali has been found guilty of unprofessional conduct in seven separate incidents during the last decade, five of which involved sexual impropriety.

Earlier this week, a Regina man said Ali took him on as a new patient at the Northgate Medi Clinic. The doctor told the patient his licence is suspended by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan.

“I was absolutely shocked to read that that is the case,” Duncan said Friday in an interview. “I share the college of physicians and surgeons’ concern with what appears to be a grey area in how these types of suspensions are put in place, (and) in terms of what a physician can and cannot do under suspension.”

In December, a college disciplinary committee found Ali guilty of inappropriate conduct and sexual impropriety in his dealings with three female patients in 2011. He also pleaded guilty to examining a female patient without a chaperone present — a condition the college had earlier placed on his practice.

The council of the college voted in January to suspend Ali’s licence to practise medicine until March, when a penalty hearing was to take place. At that hearing, Ali asked for an adjournment so he could present further medical evidence at a June council meeting. The adjournment was granted on the condition that he remain suspended until June.

The college’s lawyer, Bryan Salte, has said he intends to ask the council to revoke Ali’s medical licence, and has referred to Ali as “ungovernable.”

On Thursday, Salte said current law allows Ali to see patients as long as he doesn’t charge any money, and informs the patient his licence is suspended.

Duncan said he understands why a suspended doctor might need to see patients to tie up loose ends, such as delivering test results.

“We don’t want their patients to be left without information,” Duncan said.

Ali has said he is seeing patients for free because doctors are in short supply.

That Ali was taking on a new patient is what concerns Duncan.

The provincial health ministry is currently studying whether fixing the loophole would require changes to regulation or to law, Duncan said.

“We’ll work to make those changes as quickly as we can,” he said.

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REGINA — A Saskatchewan doctor continues to see patients at a Regina clinic despite being suspended from practising medicine by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan.

Dr. Amjad Ali's status as a physician is now being debated by the college and the Ministry of Health after a Regina resident raised concerns about Ali's standing.

Ken Grey was looking for a family physician and saw a notice that a medi clinic in the Northgate Mall was accepting new patients. When Grey went to the clinic on Wednesday, he was met by Ali.

“He told me that he was currently under suspension,” said Grey, who decided to stay.

During the examination, Ali asked Grey about his medical history, took his blood pressure and gave him a blood work requisition.

Grey was unsure if he should have the lab work done because while waiting to see Ali, he had searched the doctor’s name on his phone and found newspaper stories about his history of suspensions.

In December, a college disciplinary committee found Ali guilty of inappropriate conduct and sexual impropriety in his dealings with three female patients in 2011. He also pleaded guilty to examining a female patient without a chaperone present — a condition the college had earlier placed on his practice.

Ali has been found to have acted unprofessionally in seven separate incidents, including two other sexually improper interactions with patients in 2004.

The council of the college voted on Jan. 18 to suspend Ali's licence to practise medicine until March 23, when a penalty hearing was to take place. At that hearing, Ali asked for an adjournment so he could present further medical evidence at a June council meeting.

The adjournment was granted on the condition that Ali remain suspended until June.

"One of the issues which Dr. Ali has raised is, can he assist patients during the period of his suspension if he doesn't charge anybody — he doesn't charge the patient, he doesn't charge (the government's Medical Services Branch)?" said Bryan Salte, the college's associate registrar and legal counsel.

Because Ali didn't receive payment for his services and indicated that he was suspended to Grey, he wasn't misrepresenting his credentials, Salte said.

If Ali writes a letter to a specialist, that does not constitute practising medicine providing he is not compensated because it is the receiving physician's responsibility to provide treatment, Salte said.

"We're told that he is not charging anybody for any of this," said Salle. "If we receive different information, it would obviously have an impact on our perspective. At the moment, that is what we've been told and that falls within the permissible range of things that can be done."

Salte said the college has discussed with the government its concern about tying money to the practice of medicine.

"I use the example sometimes that I can do open heart surgery on you without committing an offence under the Medical Profession Act as long as I don't charge you for it, which strikes me as being a bit strange, but nonetheless that's the way it's defined in our legislation," Salte said.

The Ministry of Health does not support suspended doctors seeing patients, said Brad Havervold, executive director of the ministry's workforce planning branch.

"This is a highly irregular practice," he said. "It's not something that I have seen by physicians in the past who have been suspended or even who have been under investigation by the college."

He noted the college is the ultimate interpreter of the Medical Profession Act, which sets out the policies and procedures for how it regulates its members. However, Havervold said the ministry and college have differing interpretations of the act.

"We'll be working with them very closely to make sure that the act is interpreted and applied in the spirit of which it is intended and that's public protection," Havervold said.

The act speaks to the issue of payment, but "that's not the only parameter, in our opinion, that constitutes the practice of medicine," he said.

When contacted Thursday, Ali confirmed that he did not charge Grey or any other patients for office visits.

"I am the guy who told him that I'm suspended and I am the one who told him that I cannot charge him for anything, but that I am going to help him... The college has set down their rules and I'm following the rules," Ali said.

Ali plans to continue to see patients because he knows there is a physician shortage.

"I've had eight months of suspension already, no income and I am almost bankrupt now, but I still keep the door open, pay the secretary and make sure the patients are looked after," he said.
Regina MD temporarily loses licence

Janet French
The StarPhoenix

Saturday, January 19, 2013

A Regina family doctor who has run afoul of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan several times has temporarily lost his medical licence again.

The council of the college governing the medical profession in Saskatchewan voted Friday to suspend Dr. Amjad Ali’s licence until March 23, when a penalty hearing for his latest transgressions takes place.

In December, a college disciplinary committee found Ali guilty of inappropriate conduct and sexual impropriety in his dealings with three different patients in the summer of 2011. He also pleaded guilty to examining a female patient without a chaperone present - a condition the college had earlier placed on his practice.

Ali has been found to have acted unprofessionally in seven separate instances, including two other sexually improper interactions with patients in 2004.

The college's lawyer, Bryan Salte, says he intends to ask council to revoke Ali's licence at a March penalty hearing.

"The conduct here is very serious, very significant, very problematic," Salte said. "When one considers the sequence of events that have led up to this, and Dr. Ali’s unwillingness to follow the normal expectations of physician behaviour, I suggest it should bring you to the conclusion he should not be allowed to practice between now and March 23."

All’s lawyer, Aaron Fox, argued his client was stressed out, skipping meals and working long hours, seven days a week at the Regina Northgate Medi Clinic to ensure every patient who wanted care was seen.

Not taking care of himself contributed to Ali's unusual behaviour, Fox said, and the doctor intends to prove he has since taken steps to improve his physical and mental state.

"None of these involve physically inappropriate medical examinations," Fox said in an interview. "It is truly and truly quite bizarre - a suggestion of inappropriate comments being made to a patient that he had dealt with hundreds of times before. Something doesn't quite click in there."

After seeking the two-month adjournment to better compile evidence on Ali's lifestyle improvements, Fox argued Ali should be able to see patients until his March penalty hearing.

Fox suggested restrictions on his work, such as that he only see male patients and female patients over age 50 and that he only practise nine hours a day. He also suggested Ali’s medical office staff report directly to the college if they see him breaking any of the conditions.

Council rejected that proposal. The most recent three cases prompting discipline took place in June and August of 2011. The disciplinary committee found Ali stayed in an exam room while a patient was undressing, and dressing, without offering her any covering. Later, in his office, he asked her to be his lover and tried to kiss her.

The second patient, who was having trouble at her existing job, asked Ali for work at his clinic.

The committee found he said he could fire a male employee to give her a job and that she should come back after work that day so he could "suck her breasts."

Ali told a third patient details about his personal problems with his girlfriend and family, and asked "invasive" questions about her romantic life that had no pertinence to medical problems that brought her to the doctor.

Fox said Ali is now being treated for a benign brain tumour, from which he is expected to recover, but that is not believed to have influenced his behaviour.

In 2004, Ali was found guilty of two counts of unprofessional conduct in connection with an exam and conversations with two different patients. His licence was suspended for three months and he was ordered to pay $20,000 in legal costs.

In November 2011, a discipline committee found Ali guilty of falsifying a document he submitted to the Saskatchewan government's medical services branch in 2008. It resulted in him receiving a $4,582.40 payment for work another doctor performed. He was fined $10,000 and suspended from practising medicine for six months.

In March 2012, the college suspended his licence for six months after he was found guilty of falsifying an eight-year-old patient’s medical record after a confrontation with her mother.

Ali appealed the two most recent findings to the Court of Queen's Bench, which a judge heard in November. Fox said he and his client are still waiting for a written decision.

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The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan has suspended a Regina doctor’s licence for six months after he was found guilty of falsifying a patient’s record.

On Friday, the college also ordered Dr. Amjad Ali of Regina to pay more than $37,000 for a fine and legal fees for adding two inaccurate entries to an eight-year-old girl’s medical chart after learning her mother filed a complaint to the college.

The unprofessional conduct charge followed a Jan. 20, 2010, incident at Regina’s Northgate Medi-Clinic, where Ali and the patient’s mother got into a conflict. Ali says the woman made a racist remark to him. The woman said Ali yelled at her and called her a “crazy lady.”

A college discipline committee believed the patient and her mother’s version of events, and earlier this month, found Ali guilty of unprofessional conduct.

At a penalty hearing Friday in Saskatoon, Ali’s lawyer David Thera said his client had accepted the committee’s ruling. However, when handed a microphone, Ali insisted the mother made a racist remark and said the college is not recognizing how significant of a problem racism is for the province’s doctors.

“The college, on the other hand, wants to put me out of business,” he said.

Although the committee found Ali made no errors in medical treatment or diagnosis, an excerpt quoted in the written decision points out that inaccurate medical records can put patients at risk.

In a January hearing, the girl’s mother testified Ali handed over a prescription for her daughter within three minutes of entering the exam room and without ever touching or examining her daughter.

A confrontation ensued in which she raised her voice and refused to take the prescription.

The mother said she and her daughter left the room, and Ali yelled down the hall after her, calling her a “crazy lady” and telling her never to come back. The daughter recounted a similar tale, saying she was crying and scared and “felt like I was going to puke.”

Ali, who is of South Asian descent and from Toronto originally, said he backed out of the room during the confrontation and said the mother called him a ‘money-hungry coloured who doesn’t deserve to be in this country.’

A forensic investigation into writing on the child’s medical chart found a note about the child’s temperature (which he never measured) and notes in the margin about the mother’s purported racist and abusive remarks were written in different inks than Ali’s original notes from the exam.

The committee said Ali likely added the notes to the patient’s chart after he found out the mother had complained to the college in an attempt to deflect attention away from his behaviour.

The case is Ali’s first brush with college authorities. In 2004, Ali was found guilty of two counts of unprofessional conduct in connection with an exam and conversations with two different patients. His licence was suspended for three months and he was ordered to pay $20,000 in legal costs.

In November 2011, a discipline committee found Ali guilty of falsifying a document he submitted to the Saskatchewan government’s medical services branch in 2008. It resulted in him receiving a $4,582.40 payment for work another doctor performed. He was fined $10,000 and suspended from practising medicine for six months, but that suspension is on hold while he appeals the decision to the Court of Queen’s Bench.

At the penalty hearing, college lawyer Bryan Salte argued past penalties have failed to improve Ali’s conduct and the council should revoke his medical licence for a year, levy a fine of $10,000 and order him to pay the college’s legal costs, which are more than $27,000.

“There is a certain point in time when you may find a member ungovernable,” Salte said. “This time is coming close.”

Thera argued the penalty the college sought was “excessive” compared to punishments handed out in other cases where doctors were found to have falsified records.

Thera asked for a reprimand, or, at most, a three-month suspension. He also requested Ali be required to pay half of the case’s cost, or about $13,400.

Thera said he would not be available to comment on the penalty decision until next week.
Regina doctor suspended over patient record

CBC News
Posted: Mar 30, 2012 7:56 PM CST
Last Updated: Mar 30, 2012 8:00 PM CST

A Regina doctor has been suspended for six months after being found guilty of unprofessional conduct relating to a patient record.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons said Dr. Amjad Ali entered a temperature reading on a child's chart, but he never actually took the girl's temperature.

The child and her mother went to his walk-in clinic in January, 2010. The girl had pain when urinating.

The issue of the patient record went to the college after the mother complained that Dr. Ali was prescribing medication for her daughter without any examination.

The mother took her child to another clinic where the girl was diagnosed with an infection that was treated with antibiotics.

According to the college, the mother was also upset with Dr. Ali because when she expressed surprise to him about his lack of examination of her child, he accused the woman of making a racist remark.

The doctor even added a note to the patient chart, accusing the woman of calling him a "money hungry coloured."

The college said the doctor's version of events was not believable.

*With files from the CBC's Kathy Fitzpatrick*

Comments are closed.
Regina doctor found guilty of falsifying patient record

BY JANET FRENCH, THE STARPHOENIX

MARCH 30, 2012

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan has suspended a Regina doctor's licence for six months after he was found guilty of falsifying a patient's record.

On Friday, the college also ordered Dr. Amjad Ali of Regina attending a penalty hearing in Saskatoon Friday, March 30, 2012.

The unprofessional conduct charge followed a Jan. 20, 2010 incident at Regina's Northgate Medi-Clinic where Ali and the patient's mother got into a conflict.

A forensic investigation into writing on the child's medical chart found a note about the child's temperature (which he never measured), and notes in the margin about the mother's purported racist and abusive remarks, were written in different inks than Ali's original notes from the exam.

The committee said Ali likely added the notes to the patient's chart after he found out the mother had complained to the college, in an attempt to deflect attention away from his behaviour.

The case not Ali's first brush with college authorities. In 2004, Ali was found guilty of two counts of unprofessional conduct in relation to an exam and conversations with two different patients. His licence was suspended for three months and he was ordered to pay $20,000 in legal costs.

In November 2011, a discipline committee found Ali guilty of falsifying a document he submitted to the Saskatchewan government's medical services branch in 2008. It resulted in him receiving a $4,582.40 payment for work another doctor performed. He was fined $10,000 and suspended from practising medicine for six months, but that suspension is on hold while he appeals the decision to the Court of Queen's Bench.

At the penalty hearing, college lawyer Bryan Salte argued past penalties have failed to improve Ali's conduct, and the council should revoke his medical licence for a year, levy a fine of $10,000, and order him to pay the college's legal costs, which are more than $27,000.

Thera argued the penalty the college sought was "excessive" compared to punishments handed out in other cases where doctors were found to have falsified records.

Thera asked for a reprimand, or, at most, a three-month suspension. He also requested Ali be required to pay only half of the case's cost, or about $13,400.

"What we are trying to do is address behaviour rather than withdrawing a physician from providing services," Thera said.

Thera said he would not be available to comment on the penalty decision until next week.

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