Local anaesthesiologist gets privileges revoked

By Jaime Polmateer / Estevan Mercury
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Local anaesthesiologist Dr. Mehdi Horri recently had his certificate of registration with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan revoked, following an act of misconduct that happened when he was practising in Ontario.

In the meantime Estevan will be limited to one anaesthesiologist, Dr. Anthony Davies, but a replacement for Horri is already being sought for recruitment.

"We immediately started to put the pieces together to make sure we could provide coverage for anaesthesiology, we talked immediately with Dr. Davies and the recruiting process, that was started immediately," said Greg Hoffer, executive director of St. Joseph's Hospital.

"We've talked to other physicians and they're picking up the slack that'll be created by this, that was our reaction and that's what we did immediately upon learning and credit goes to the medical staff for stepping forward in this regard."

Hoffer added that Horri's revocation of privileges was 100 per cent up to the college with St. Joseph's Hospital having no part in the decision.

According to documents from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, Horri was found to have committed an act of professional misconduct relevant to the practice of medicine by having engaged in a sexual relationship with a patient too soon after the termination of the doctor-patient relationship.

Bryan Salte, legal counsel for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan, said legislation allows them to take disciplinary action if a physician has been disciplined in another province.

There was a hearing and the college's council determined what it thought was the appropriate penalty based on the facts as it has them, which happened June 16.

"Revocation means he doesn't have a licence. He's not eligible to reapply for nine months, and that doesn't mean he'll get his licence back after nine months. His licence is revoked, which means he doesn't have a license and won't have a licence unless the council concludes that it's appropriate to give him a licence back," Salte said.

"In order to that he'd have to (provide) evidence that he's been assessed . . . and had met other conditions that would be appropriate to say that, although his licence was taken away based upon the conduct that occurred in Ontario, at that future time that it's appropriate to return a licence to him."

A change.org petition to get Horri reinstated was started by Lori Dumontel last week and as of press time had already garnered roughly 250 signatures.

The description on the petition says, "Dr. Horri is a valuable asset to the Estevan community. His skills are crucial to our hospital. His role as a anaesthesiologist in our hospital's surgery department has alleviated many patients needing to seek surgeries in Regina, SK."

Whether or not the petition will help get Horri's privileges is up to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan, Hoffer said.

Horri is also on the website ratemds.com where patients can go to assess medical professionals and all the reviews for the Estevan anaesthesiologist are remarkably positive, often giving him five out of five stars.

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According to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan, Dr. Mehdi Horri is no longer working as a doctor in Estevan.

"He has had his license revoked," stated St Joseph's Hospital Executive Director, Greg Hoffart. "This suspension isn't from the Health Region or the Hospital, it's from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan."

Bryan Salte, legal council and Associate Registrar at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan, explained that the revocation came into effect on Friday when the hearing occurred.

"If you go on to the website of the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons, you'll find the finding of unprofessional conduct in Ontario. All of the events that relate to this occurred in Ontario. They were the ones who took the action and then our college took action based upon what had occurred in Ontario."

Dr. Horri admitted to an inappropriate relationship with a patient too soon after the doctor-patient relationship ended. A disciplinary hearing took place in Ontario on September 26, 2016 and on March 24, 2017, Dr. Horri's was fined and had his medical licence in Ontario revoked. He appealed the decision on April 6, 2017 and was allowed to continue practicing pending that appeal subject to an understanding that he would not see any female patients without a female chaperone. There is no word yet if he is planning to appeal this ruling.

"Physicians always have a right to apply to the courts for a review of our College's decisions. I have no idea if that's what he intends to do but every physician has a legal right to go to court to ask the court to overturn a college decision."

Mr. Salte added that the college operates on a principle of transparency for patients and the public.

"We make sure we provide information about what actions we take and why we take them. But in terms of the events that led to the revocation of his license, that's pretty clear and once we have a chance to put this information on our website, it will be there and they can then review it for themselves and see what action we took and why we took that action."

"If you want to look to the facts, again because this is a result of a discipline hearing in Ontario, you may wish to check the Ontario College website, do a search for Dr. Horri's name there. The discipline committee decision out of Ontario is there. It is fully available just like any other court decision might be and would give you all of the facts that our council looked at when they decided that revocation was the appropriate penalty."