

Stephen Bartlett, Former RMT

Location:

New Westminster, BC

Date of Action:

May 5, 2022

Nature of Action: Pursuant to section 35(1)(a) of the *Health Professions Act* (the “Act”), a panel of the Inquiry Committee made an order to impose limits and/or conditions on Stephen Bartlett’s registration with CMTBC, in order to protect the public.

Specifically, the panel imposed the following limits on Mr. Bartlett’s practice of massage therapy:

- Mr. Bartlett may not perform any neck or spine treatments, including the cervical spine.
- Mr. Bartlett may not perform any pubic symphysis treatments.

Reasons: On February 14, 2022, CMTBC received a complaint from a female patient of the registrant, who alleged that during a massage therapy treatment, Mr. Bartlett placed his fingers and then his palm on her pubis (over her pants), without advising her of the treatment plan and without seeking her consent. The patient also alleged that Mr. Bartlett cracked her neck in order to “align it”, in a manner which was loud and painful.

The Inquiry Committee was satisfied that there was a *prima facie* case regarding the allegation that Mr. Bartlett touched the patient’s pubis without informing her and without obtaining her consent. The Inquiry Committee panel was also satisfied that there was a *prima facie* case regarding the allegation that Mr. Bartlett acted outside the scope of practice for an RMT in B.C. by performing a neck manipulation on the patient using a high velocity, low amplitude thrust.

The Inquiry Committee panel found, in relation to both allegations, that the alleged conduct is likely to recur, and that there is a real risk of harm to patients, colleagues and other members of the public, if Mr. Bartlett were allowed to continue to practice without restriction. Therefore, the panel

determined that the public must be protected by an interim order during the investigation and pending any discipline hearing.

The panel considered what interim measures would be sufficient and proportionate in this case. Having weighed the different options and the circumstances of this case, and having considered the impact on the registrant, the Inquiry Committee panel concluded that the above-described limits on practice are proportionate and sufficient to protect the public during the investigation or pending a discipline hearing.

Important Note: Limits, conditions and suspensions ordered by the Inquiry Committee under section 35(1) of the Act are made to protect the public during an investigation or pending a hearing of the Discipline Committee. Measures taken under section 35(1) of the Act pertain to allegations which are and remain unproven unless admitted by a registrant or determined by the Discipline Committee.