

Joanne Argatoff, RMT

Location:

West Vancouver, BC

Date of Action:

November 10, 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 a suspension on Joanne Argatoff’s registration with CMTBC. While suspended, Ms. Argatoff is not entitled to practice as a registered massage therapist in British Columbia.

Reasons: On January 5, 2022, the Inquiry Committee, acting on its own motion, initiated an investigation of Ms. Argatoff. During this investigation, Ms. Argatoff failed to engage with the College or respond to correspondence from the College.

As part of this investigation, on August 22, 2022, an undercover investigator for the College attended Ms. Argatoff’s clinic in West Vancouver posing as a patient and received massage therapy treatment from Ms. Argatoff. The investigator observed that the clinic was dirty and there was a dog present.

On September 28, 2022, two College investigators attended Ms. Argatoff’s clinic to conduct an inspection. The investigators observed that the reception area was dimly lit, dirty, cluttered, and had a strong odour; additionally, there was a dog lying in the same area. The kitchen contained garbage and dirty dishes. The inspectors asked about a back room in the clinic, and Ms. Argatoff admitted that a friend had been sleeping there; she proceeded to wake him, and he left. Finally, Ms. Argatoff was unable to produce her schedule for at least two of the last three months and was unable to provide treatment records for any of her patients.

The Inquiry Committee was satisfied that there was a *prima facie* case that Ms. Argatoff had been uncooperative and non-responsive to the College’s correspondence, had not complied with the College’s Bylaws (specifically, Schedule “E,” the Standard for Patient Records), and had not complied with the College’s Practice Standard on the Practice Environment.

The Inquiry Committee panel was satisfied that there is a real, non-speculative, and immediate risk of a recurrence of conduct that is serious in nature and necessitates action to protect the public. Therefore, the panel determined that the public must be protected by additional interim measures during the investigation and pending any discipline hearing.

The panel considered what interim measures would be sufficient and proportionate in this case. The panel was not satisfied that Ms. Argatoff would comply with any terms or conditions that would satisfactorily protect the public. Therefore, 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 protection of the public can only be achieved through the suspension of Ms. Argatoff's registration.

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.