



Public Notification

Dr. Jonas LaForge, ND

Date of action: October 2015

Description of action taken:

The College of Naturopathic Physicians of British Columbia (the “College”) has entered into a Consent Order with Dr. Jonas LaForge, (the “Registrant”), license #416, under sections 33(6) and 36(1)(b), (c), and (d) of the *Health Professions Act*, RSBC 1996, c 183 (the “Act”), on the following terms:

- 1) The Registrant admitted and consented to be reprimanded for:
 - a. making a false declaration in his application for registration with the College;
 - b. providing Skype medical consultations through various marijuana dispensaries and/or otherwise facilitating patient’s access to marijuana;
 - c. administering Botox (Botulinum toxin types A and B in any form including, but not limited to, Botox and Xeomin) to patients in the course of his practice prior to obtaining the necessary certification from the College;
 - d. teaching courses concerning the injection of Botox prior to obtaining the necessary certification from the College; and
 - e. providing cash-only Botox services in and around Vancouver and the Lower Mainland without issuing receipts.
- 2) The Registrant consented and undertook to pay a fine of \$25,000 to the College, of which \$12,500 must be paid within six (6) months of the date of the Consent Order and the remainder of \$12,500 must be paid no later than twelve (12) months from the date of the Consent Order.
- 3) The Registrant consented to the suspension of his practice of naturopathic medicine, as defined by the *Naturopathic Physicians Regulation*, BC Reg 282/2008, to commence on the date of the Consent Order, and undertook not to engage in the practice of naturopathic medicine until the later of: a) the expiration

- of the 12 month suspension; or b) the date that the Registrant has paid the fine in full.
- 4) The Registrant consented and undertook to complete a course in ethics for naturopathic doctors, to be approved in advance in writing by the Registrar, prior to being re-admitted to practice.
 - 5) The Registrant consented and undertook to maintain the continuing education hours required all registrants of the College throughout the period of his suspension, and that he would not return to practice until he had completed and declared the required continuing education hours for the College's 2013-2015 continuing education period.
 - 6) Following the expiration of the suspension and the Registrant's return to practice:
 - a. the Registrant consented and undertook to undergo a period of practice under the supervision of a naturopathic physician to be approved in writing by the Registrar, and in a clinic that must also be approved in writing by the Registrar. The Registrant consented and undertook to practise in under the approved supervisor and at the approved clinic for no less than twelve (12) months following his return to practice (the "Supervision Period"), subject to the Committee's receipt of reports following the conclusion of the Supervision Period that satisfy the Committee that the Registrant may practice safely without supervision.
 - b. the Registrant consented and undertook to meet with the Supervisor for one mentoring meeting of 30 minutes' duration every two (2) weeks during the course of the Supervision Period, to discuss standards of practice and ethical issues that have arisen in his practice.
 - c. the Registrant consented and undertook to arrange for the provision of a monthly progress report from the Supervisor to the Registrar throughout the duration of the Supervision Period.
 - d. the Registrant acknowledged that he will be solely responsible for any and all costs associated with the Supervision Period, including the provision of the Monthly Supervision Reports.
 - 7) The Registrant consented and undertook to provide the College with a monthly list of the contact information for every patient that he provided naturopathic medicine service to for the preceding month (the "Monthly Patient List"), for a period of three (3) months from the date of his return to practice. The Registrant acknowledged that he would be solely responsible for all costs associated with each Monthly Patient List. The Registrant consented to the College contacting the patients in the Monthly Patient List to verify information.

- 8) The Registrant consented and undertook to cooperate with random spot audits by an inspector appointed by the Inquiry Committee, at any time during the twenty-four (24) months following the Registrant's return to practice, to review his clinical records for the purpose of ensuring that his practice remains consistent with the standards of practice for naturopathic doctors in British Columbia. The Registrant acknowledged that the frequency and timing of the audits is at the sole discretion of the Inquiry Committee. The Registrant acknowledged that he would be responsible for all costs associated with random spot audits, including inspector fees and disbursements, and that requirement to pay such costs forthwith upon receipt of invoices from the College constitutes a term of the Consent Order.
- 9) The Registrant consented and undertook that his future practice of naturopathic medicine and professional conduct will be above reproach.

Reasons for action taken:

The College received a written complaint that the Registrant was providing cash-only Botox services without issuing receipts and Skype medical consultations for medicinal marijuana licenses, and that he had a criminal record in the United States. The complaint was forwarded to the Inquiry Committee, which commenced an investigation into the complaint.

Over the course of the investigation, the Registrant acknowledged and admitted that he had:

- 1) administered Botox in the course of his practice, beginning in 2006, and that he had done so without certification from the College;
- 2) taught a course concerning the administration, including injection, of Botox;
- 3) assisted patients in accessing marijuana through illegal marijuana dispensaries by providing patient consultations by Skype and "confirmation of diagnosis" letters;
- 4) knowingly continued to facilitate patient access to marijuana after receiving the College's notice regarding medical cannabis dated July 24, 2014, which clearly stated that naturopathic doctors must not prescribe or recommend cannabis to patients; and
- 5) failed to disclose his criminal conviction at the time that he applied for registration with the College.

The Inquiry Committee considered the Registrant's admissions and determined, under section 33(6)(c) of the *Act*, that this would be an appropriate case in which to see a consent order under section 36 of the *Act* with comprehensive terms to address the Registrant's failure to meet the standards of practice of the profession because:

- 1) the Registrant had admitted to, and expressed an understanding of, the seriousness of the conduct at issue;
- 2) the Registrant had agreed to a twelve (12) month suspension of his practice as a consequence of his actions;
- 3) the Registrant was willing to take rehabilitative and remedial action, including clinical supervision, mentorship, and additional education, in order to raise his understanding of ethics and the standards of practice to the requisite level and to ensure that the conduct admitted would not be repeated in the future; and
- 4) adequate steps could be taken to monitor the Registrant's practice, as well as to assess his ongoing ethical, and professional development.

The Committee concluded, and Registrant agreed, that the appropriate remedial action was a Consent Order pursuant to section 36(1) of the *Act*, which would enable the College to monitor the Registrant's practice to protect the public safety and require the Registrant to undertake further remedial steps and to bring his professionalism and standard of practice into alignment with that of the profession after a one-year suspension period.