



Type: Disciplinary Order

Name: Dr. Richard Cockwill, DC

Location: Courtenay, BC

Date of Action: July 5, 2025

Nature of Action and Reasons: On April 7, 2025, a panel of the Discipline Committee of the College of Complementary Health Professionals of BC (CCHPBC) convened to hear a formal citation issued to Dr. Richard Cockwill under the *Health Professions Act* (The “HPA”).

The citation set out allegations that Dr. Cockwill breached Part 15 of the Professional Conduct Handbook (“PCH”), and was therefore non-compliant with a standard, limit, or condition imposed under the HPA, as set out in s39(1)(b) of the HPA. Specifically, he intentionally, and repeatedly breached Part 15.1 – 15.3 of the PCH from January 1, 2023 through September 20, 2023 by:

- Applying X-rays to patients, or authorizing or instructing other people to apply X-rays to patients, when the application of X-rays was not indicated by a patient history or physical examination that identified serious pathology or clinical reasons to suspect serious pathology,
- Using routine and repeat X-rays as a regular protocol during the evaluation and diagnosis of patients, for the purpose of one or more of:
 - screening for spinal anomalies or serious pathology in the absence of any clinical indication,
 - diagnosing or re-assessing spinal conditions in the absence of any clinical indication,
- conducting biomechanical analysis or listings to identify spinal dysfunction, whether called subluxation, fixation, or by any other term.
- Failing to document a clinical indication for X-rays in his patients’ clinical records before applying X-rays (or issuing authorizations or instructions for other people to apply them).

Following the issuance of the citation hearing, on March 8, 2025, Dr. Cockwill and the College entered into an agreed statement of facts wherein Dr. Cockwill admitted to the conduct as set out in the citation.

Following the discipline hearing, the Discipline Committee panel issued decisions and reasons dated July 5th, 2025.



The College and Dr. Cockwill were given the opportunity to provide submissions on penalty and costs to the panel.

Panel's Decision dated July 5, 2025

In summary, considering the agreement of the parties, the evidence, and the statutory framework of the HPA, the Panel has determined that the Respondent:

- a. Did not comply with Part 15 of the PCH, a standard imposed under the HPA, contrary to section 39(1)(b) of the HPA; and
- b. committed unprofessional conduct, contrary to section 39(1)(c) of the HPA.

The Panel reiterated in its decision that it does not have the power to adjudicate the instigation of Part 15 of the PCH, or make a ruling on its merits as they apply to Dr. Cockwill's practice.

The Panel considered Dr. Cockwill's intentional and repeated breaches of College standards to be serious. The evidence submitted by Dr. Cockwill regarding his intention to continue to breach the PCH was an aggravating factor.

Conclusion

In summary, the panel found that the College, in conjunction with the admissions provided for in the agreement of facts, had proved the allegations in the citation to the requisite standard. The hearing proceeded to a decision on penalty and costs, as outlined below. The Panel was of the view that the penalty in this case should demonstrate to the public that registrants must comply with professional standards of the College, or face meaningful consequences if they choose not to do so.

Panel's decision

Following the issuance of the July 5, 2025 decision, the panel, as required by law, requested submissions in writing from the College and Dr. Cockwill regarding the appropriate penalty and costs. The panel determined it had jurisdiction to impose any of the penalties listed in s. 39(2) of the Health Professions Act on Dr. Cockwill, and it ordered that:

- He be reprimanded.
- His registration be suspended for two months from August 1, 2025 to October 1, 2025;
- The Respondent's practice is subject to an immediate condition that he must at all times comply with the PCH, including the requirement to instruct his staff and associates, in writing, not to



engage in practices that would violate the PCH. This condition applies indefinitely.

- At the conclusion of his suspension, and for a period of 24 months thereafter, that he make his patient charts, day sheets, and x-ray logs, or copies thereof, available for inspection by the College through its inspectors at their request, including by sending copies of records to the inspectors electronically upon request.
- Pay costs to the College in the amount of \$9,750.

The Panel stressed a strong need to send a clear message to Dr. Cockwill and to other registrants of the College about the importance of adhering to any Standards of Practice that apply to their profession, even if they disagree with the prescribed standard. Being a registrant of a regulated profession requires an individual to comply with the professional standards established by the regulatory body. A registrant is not entitled to simply practise in the manner of their choosing. Dr. Cockwill, like all College registrants, must practise in accordance with the standards of the College.

The provisioning of x-rays outside of what is permitted in the Professional Conduct Handbook is serious. Dr. Cockwill, throughout the disciplinary process has maintained his disagreement with Section 15 of the Professional Conduct Handbook and has indicated he would continue to contravene it.

Enforcement of the Practice Standards is critical to the College's ability to uphold high standards for patient care. The public must have confidence that members of the profession will be held to account when they fail to adhere to the standards and regulations which govern their profession. The panel found that a serious penalty was necessary to uphold and protect the public interest in this matter.