August 5, 2014

College of Physicians and Surgeons
of Ontario
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I am writing to express my very deep concern over the issue of physicians and surgeons' right to act according to their individual conscience in cases of non-emergency care.

It is my understanding that this issue is part of the College's policy review of its Human Rights Code and I urge you and those studying this issue to place your trust in the professionalism, the ethics, the moral judgment and common sense of your member physicians and surgeons rather than impose upon them non-emergency practices that would violate their consciences and perhaps result in the loss of some of the best and brightest of them.

Non-emergency care is a service and patients are often referred to other physicians and surgeons when their personal physician does not perform, for any of a variety of reasons, a particular service. An unconscience, perhaps, but a small one, and one which patients currently accept and understand with little complaint. Respect for the freedom of conscience of physicians
and surgeons is far more important than this small inconvenience. I, for one, do not wish to be treated by a physician or surgeon who is not allowed to use his or her moral judgment in my care or who does not believe that what he or she is doing is moral. This would be a slippery slope indeed!