July 29, 2014

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
80 College Street
Toronto, ON M5G 2E2

Attention: Policy Department - Physicians and the Ontario Human Rights Code

Dear Sirs:

YES - a physician should be allowed to refuse to provide a patient with a treatment or procedure because it conflicts with the physician's religious or moral beliefs? This refers to non-emergency care and includes referrals.

If we force physicians to go against their conscience:

- any physician with a functioning conscience will leave the profession thereby increasing the shortage of physicians.

- it will be difficult to recruit new people to the profession, again increasing the shortage.

- the physicians who stay will have labelled themselves as persons without a conscience, One hesitates to apply this term to even our worst thugs and is far from the esteem physicians are held in now. Anyone with a functioning conscience respects the right to conscience in others even if they do not agree with their views.

- the College will undermine its right to demand adherence to its own principles such as "trustworthiness." A conscience is what allows humanity to be law abiding.

- patients will lose trust in their physician. Any physician who can be forced to go against their conscience by the patient cannot be counted on to not give in to others to go against their patient.

- the physicians' right not to be discriminated against in employment on the basis of religion will be breached at its deepest level. Even in wartime we make allowance for conscientious objectors.

The patient's and society's best protection is a physician who is allowed to follow his or her conscience.