July 22, 2014

Dear Members of the Council,

We are writing to provide feedback to the current CPSO policy on Physicians and the Ontario Human Rights Code (the policy) [1] from the perspective of medical educators. We applaud the College’s openness in engaging both the profession and the public in this important discussion.

We affirm that physicians should not discriminate against patients based on a patient’s race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status and/or disability. Given the increasing diversity of our patients, we likewise affirm that diversity is essential to continuing to provide culturally sensitive care to Ontario residents. In order to ensure diversity we need to be respectful and open to the personal values and beliefs of our current and future physicians. The University of Toronto, the largest university in Ontario, has existing ethics guidelines that support trainees’ right to refuse participation in activities for ethical reasons [2]. We believe that similarly, the CPSO should continue to endorse the position that physicians not be compelled to provide services they personally object to, especially in nonemergency situations. The CPSO, being the licensing body of Ontario, plays a significant role in the education and ongoing practice of Ontario physicians.

We propose that the College clearly articulate its position in the policy that its member physicians and trainees are not mandated to provide or facilitate services they ethically objected to. In doing so, the College would continue to foster a culturally respectful and safe environment to practice and learn.
References:
