Tuesday, February 10, 2015

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

SUBJECT: Response to draft “Professional Obligations and Human Rights” policy

I wish to address the segment of the policy beginning with line 150. I have no issue with the principles laid out by the College, but would inform you that the process laid out does create what is, to me and my beliefs, a requirement for direct participation in an act to which I conscientiously object, namely direct referral. My comments are particularly made in light of the recent Supreme Court decision about Physician Assisted Suicide, which this policy will directly impact.

I would respectfully point out that the College’s purpose could be achieved by the following modification of the paragraph beginning line 156.

*Where physicians are unwilling to provide certain elements of care due to their moral or religious beliefs, then either*

- an effective referral to another health care provider must be provided to the patient, or
- the health care provider must submit to the College, for advance approval, a suggested alternate mechanism that ensures
  o Respect for patient dignity;
  o Timely access to care; and
  o Protection for patient safety

in the provisions of such care.

*An effective referral means a referral made in good faith, to a non-objecting, available, and accessible physician or other health-care provider.*

*Where an alternate mechanism has been approved by the College, the health care provider will, as required by the College but in no instance less often than annually, provide documentation that confirms that respect, access and protection have been achieved.*

I look forward to the opportunity to continue to assist the College in its policy development in this area.