

COLLEGE OF DIETITIANS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Inquiry Case #18-25 - Complaint Outcome Report

On **November 14, 2018**, the Registrar received a written complaint from a member of the public expressing concerns about a registrant's online publication. The correspondence alleged that the article contained misleading and non-evidence-based statements.

On **November 20, 2018**, the registrant was notified of the concerns raised to the College and was asked to respond to the allegations.

The Inquiry Committee was informed of the complaint on **December 3, 2018** and appointed the Registrar to inspect the case. As the registrant was known to other members of the Inquiry Committee, a Panel was formed to preserve fairness and objectivity of the case review process. The same day, the Registrar also hired an independent subject matter expert to review the allegations, the content of the article, provide an opinion on the state of science on the topic covered in the article and address the potential risk of harm to the public.

Between **November 24 and December 6, 2018**, the Registrar received submissions from the registrant regarding their practice.

The Registrar received the subject matter expert report on **December 20, 2018**.

On **January 22, 2019**, the Inquiry Committee Panel met to review the inspection report, including the subject matter expert's report, the registrant's submissions and other scientific literature and documentary evidence. The Panel determined that there was sufficient evidence to inform the allegations.

On **January 23, 2019**, after further discussion, the Panel approved the inspection report and noted the following concerns:

- The brevity of the article was not suitable to discuss complex scientific topics as it did not afford enough space to provide an evidence-informed review of such topics, as required when writing as a "Dietitian"
- Part of the topic was not within dietetic scope of practice and the article did not address public health nutrition issues relevant to dietitians (e.g., population not eating enough fruit, vegetables and other non-transformed foods.)
- Some statements were not accurate and not evidence-informed.

Panel members determined that these concerns presented an overall low risk of harm to the public and disposed of the case under ss. 33(6)(b) and 36(1)(b) the *Health Professions Act* with proposed Consent Agreement terms for readings and courses relevant to scientific writing and evidence-informed practice.

Between **January 25 and May 14, 2019**, the registrant and the College's respective lawyers negotiated the terms of the proposed Consent Agreement.

On **May 16, 2019**, the IC panel met to reconsider the inspection report, the registrant's response and agreed to dispose of the case under s. 33(6)(a) of the *Health Professions Act* and take no further action in respect to the complaint.

The Panel provided the following advice to the registrant regarding authoring future columns using the Dietitian title:

- Consider that complex topics may not be appropriate for a short article format and ensure that:
 - the article topic is within individual dietetic scope of practice and addresses public health issues relevant to dietitians, and
 - the article is referenced and evidence- based, using current, complete, unbiased and quality sources of scientific information to support any opinions expressed.

The registrant was notified of the complaint decision on **May 29, 2019** and the Complainant received the decision letter on **June 5, 2019**.

A copy of the decision is saved in CDBC records permanently, in accordance with section 69 of the CDBC bylaws.

70 days were required to dispose of the case and **179 days** were required to close the case.