

To: **College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan**  
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Mail: 500-321A-21st Street East Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 0C1

From:

Date:

**Re:** Draft Policy on Conscientious Refusal (deadline to respond: March 6, 2015)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft policy.

I am concerned about the policy for two reasons. Even though the policy says that the physician's freedom of conscience is to be respected, further reading indicates that it is not. Clause 5.3 requires that the physician make referrals even though their conscience may not allow them to do so. Many physicians consider making a referral to be morally equivalent to aiding and abetting as in an offense in criminal law. They feel that the person making the referral is as responsible for the action as the person who performs it.

Secondly, according to the policy, physicians are required to perform procedures that go against their conscience "when a referral to another health care provider is not possible without causing a delay that would jeopardize the patient's health or well-being." (Clause 5.4) How can you respect someone's conscience when there are circumstances when you force them to go against it?

There is no human right in Canada to demand or receive particular services from a specific physician. At present, protections already exist in CPSS Code of Ethics #12 to ensure that patients are served without discrimination and have access to procedures. Rather than implementing the proposed draft policy, I would ask that you extend the code to provide conscience discussion guidelines, as a way to bolster patient and physician trust.

This policy is even more serious since the Supreme Court ruled on euthanasia and assisted suicide. Many doctors are concerned that they will not be able to practice medicine because of this policy – as they are not able to refer for, or perform euthanasia/assisted suicide.

I ask that the College reconsider this policy so that the conscience rights of physicians will be respected.

Thanks for your consideration of this matter

Sincerely.