

Dear Members,

As you may be aware, College Council recently released a draft policy **Physicians and the Ontario Human Rights Code** for external consultation. Notice of the draft policy and request for feedback were given in our June Council Update and in the July edition of *Dialogue*. We have received considerable feedback both about the timelines and the content of the draft policy.

We are writing to advise you that the deadline for this consultation has been extended to **September 12, 2008**, and we welcome your feedback. The draft policy and backgrounder are available at [www.cpsso.on.ca](http://www.cpsso.on.ca) under Policies. All feedback received will be conveyed to Council at its meeting in September.

To assist the membership, and facilitate continued debate on this draft policy, the College offers the following points of clarification.

**The draft policy is intended to explain the current law and set College expectations.**

**Current Law:** In order to assist physicians, the draft policy explains the current obligations under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* to refrain from discrimination, and to accommodate disability.

Under the *Human Rights Code*, decisions made for moral or religious beliefs *could be* considered discrimination by the Human Rights Commission or Tribunal. The College cannot comment on what decisions the Human Rights Commission or Tribunal will make.

**College Expectations:** We do not expect physicians to provide services that are contrary to their moral or religious beliefs.

As indicated in the draft policy, the College expects physicians who feel they cannot provide services because of their beliefs to do the following:

- Communicate clearly about any procedures, or treatments that they feel they cannot provide;
- Give patients information about all clinical options that are available, even those that the physician will not provide;
- Treat patients with respect; and
- Tell patients they can see another doctor, and in some circumstances, help the patient make arrangements to do so.

This last bullet point has raised concerns from respondents. We would welcome your feedback on this or any other aspect of the draft policy at [policyfeedback@cpsso.on.ca](mailto:policyfeedback@cpsso.on.ca) or by fax at (416) 967-2644.