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Dr. Robert Dickson sanctioned after admitting to unprofessional conduct

Edmonton, AB – After a hearing in January 2025, Dr. Robert Dickson, a family physician from Calgary, was sanctioned by a CPSA Hearing Tribunal for unprofessional conduct.

When commenting on water supply fluoridation in 2017, Dr. Dickson publicly impugned the credibility and integrity of specific medical and dental colleagues. This does not align with the standards outlined in the Canadian Medical Association’s [Code of Ethics and Professionalism](#), which requires physicians to treat colleagues with dignity and as persons worthy of respect.

A past decision from the Supreme Court of Canada requires tribunals to conduct a proportionality analysis to ensure rights under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Charter) are balanced with the applicable standards of conduct. In this case, the Hearing Tribunal took careful and explicit steps to balance Dr. Dickson’s Charter-protected freedoms of thought, belief, opinion and expression with the professional responsibilities that come with being a regulated physician.

The Tribunal acknowledged a physician’s right to participate in social and political discourse, and express opinions that disagree with prevailing expert opinion, while recognizing that this must be balanced with a responsibility of maintaining the public trust by upholding ethical standards, particularly around civility and respect toward colleagues.

Dr. Dickson acknowledged that his conduct towards his colleagues was unprofessional and the Tribunal accepted a joint recommendation on sanction, ordering the following:

- Dr. Dickson will receive a caution.
- At his own cost, Dr. Dickson must complete an online course on influence and advocacy.
- Dr. Dickson is responsible for a portion of the costs of the investigation and hearing, totaling \$6,250.

Resources:

[CPSA Hearing Tribunal decision](#)

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The College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta is the regulator for all physicians, physician assistants and surgeons in the province and is governed by the Health Professions Act. Our role is to protect the public by issuing practice permits to those who meet educational and training criteria, hold Alberta physicians to ethical and medical practice standards, and investigate and resolve physician-related complaints. CPSA also ensures the safety and quality of medical and diagnostic testing services in Alberta through an independent accreditation program.

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