



June 22, 2011

Statement from the College of Nurses of Ontario

To: CBC News, The National

Re: The Rose Anne McKenzie Hearing and Reporting between Jurisdictions

At today's disciplinary hearing for Rose Anne McKenzie, she admitted that she was guilty of professional misconduct because she was found to have engaged in gross negligence with respect to her care of a client by the California Board of Nursing.

The allegations that Ms McKenzie failed to advise the College about the California proceedings were withdrawn because the College was satisfied that she did not know about those proceedings until advised by the College. The Board had an out-of-date address for Ms McKenzie, and all correspondence was returned to them and marked as unknown.

The California Board never advised the College of the proceedings against Ms. McKenzie or its decision. The College only learned of these proceedings as a result of a media article in July 2009.

This case illustrates a gap in the safety net. Each regulator makes its own decisions regarding sharing information about disciplinary proceedings based on its specific statutory mandate and regulations. This means there is no comprehensive international mechanism in place to ensure regulators report findings of professional misconduct to regulators in other jurisdictions.

Ontario nurses are required by law to inform the College of an ongoing proceeding for professional misconduct and/or findings of professional misconduct made against them in other jurisdictions. It is considered professional misconduct to fail to report such information.

Given the growth in mobility of health professionals, the College has taken a number of steps to try and ensure that the public is protected by sharing its information between jurisdictions.

The College is helping to lead discussions with nursing regulators around the world about mechanisms for sharing information across jurisdictions.

The College has also proposed regulatory changes in Ontario to, among other things, expand member's reporting requirements. It has also supported in principle the establishment of a national unique identifier for nurses across Canada, and is part of discussions at the national and provincial level regarding this issue.

The College will continue to advocate with other regulators and government to ensure that public safety is enhanced.

The public can obtain information about the outcome of the hearing on the Find A Nurse register available at www.cno.org. The full decision will be made available on the website when it is released by the discipline panel. A summary of the hearing will appear in an upcoming issue of The Standard.