

PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA  
COUNTY OF HALIFAX

IN THE MATTER OF: The *Medical Act*, S.N.S. 1995-96, c. 10

-and-

IN THE MATTER OF: The *Canada Evidence Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. C-5

-and-

IN THE MATTER OF: The *Evidence Act*, R.S.N.S. 1989, c. 154

-and-

IN THE MATTER OF: Dr. Curtis Steele

### SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Dr. Curtis Steele, a medical practitioner in the Province of Nova Scotia and a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of the Province of Nova Scotia (the "College") at the time of the subject of the complaints described below, on the basis of the protections afforded to him under s. 5(2) of the *Canada Evidence Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. C-5, and s. 59(2) of the *Nova Scotia Evidence Act*, R.S.N.S. 1989, c. 154, agrees with and consents to the following in accordance with the provisions of the *Medical Act*, S.N.S. 1995-96, c. 10.

#### I. AGREED FACTS

##### **Background Information**

1. Dr. Steele received his medical degree from Tulane University (New Orleans, Louisiana) in 1958, where he also completed his specialty studies. He received a Certificate from the American Board of Psychiatry in 1967.
2. Dr. Steele moved to Nova Scotia in 1988. After passing the LMCC, he received his licence and practised in Nova Scotia, where he also was a member of the faculty of Dalhousie University Department of Psychiatry. Until 2013, Dr. Steele practised in the Community Mental Health Clinic of the Capital District Health Authority and maintained a small private practice.
3. In 2003, Patient X, then aged 14, was demonstrating rage towards her parents, among other things. She was referred to Dr. Steele for psychiatric care. Patient X was the daughter of a friend and colleague of Dr. Steele.

4. Dr. Steele saw Patient X over the course of six sessions between December, 2003 and June 11, 2004 and for two additional sessions of therapy in December, 2004.

## **II. COMPLAINT**

5. On September 26, 2013, Patient X filed a complaint with the College.

## **III. RESPONSE**

6. After invoking the protections of the Canada Evidence Act and the Nova Scotia Evidence Act, Dr. Steele responded to the complaint in writing and appeared before an Investigation Committee of the College in accordance with s. 53 of the Medical Act.

## **IV. ACTIONS OF INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE**

7. The Investigation Committee of the College conducted an investigation of the complaint, and met with Dr. Steele, Patient X, and the parents of Patient X. The Investigation Committee reported a number of areas of significant concern respecting Dr. Steele's interactions with Patient X. In particular, the Investigation Committee referred the following matters to the Hearing Committee of the College:

- (a) While engaged in a physician/patient relationship with Patient X, Dr. Steele took nude photographs of Patient X;
- (b) Dr. Steele lacked the necessary insight expected of a psychiatrist in failing to immediately recognize the impropriety of taking the photographs;
- (c) Dr. Steele failed to practice medicine in accordance with a reasonable standard of care by prescribing Paxil CR with one refill to a teenage patient, where he had not made a diagnosis to support this prescription;
- (d) Dr. Steele did not discuss the significant risks of a prescription of an SSRI with Patient X or her parents; and
- (e) Dr. Steele failed to maintain medical records in accordance with expected standards of practice.

## **V. ADMISSIONS**

8. Dr. Steele admits that he has committed a disciplinary matter violation or violations and that these matters constitute professional misconduct.

## **VI. DISPOSITION**

9. Dr. Steele consents to the revocation of his licence to practice medicine. Dr. Steele agrees that he is not eligible to reapply for a licence to practice medicine in Nova Scotia at any time in the future.

**VII. COSTS**

10. Dr. Steele agrees to pay a contribution toward the College's costs in the amount of \$5,000 inclusive of HST. The costs shall be payable prior to the conclusion of the meeting of the Hearing Committee that meets to consider whether to accept this Settlement Agreement.

**IX. EFFECTIVE DATE**

11. This Settlement Agreement shall only become effective and binding when it has been recommended for acceptance by the Investigation Committee of the College, and accepted by the Hearing Committee appointed to hear this matter.

**Dated** at Halifax, Nova Scotia this                      day of June, 2014.

Date June 10 2014.  
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Witness [Signature]  
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[Signature]  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Dr Curtis A Steele*

Date June 25/14  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Dianne Power  
\_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Marjorie A Hickey QC*  
*Counsel for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia*

Date Jul 8/14  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*MD*  
*Chair - Investigation Committee*

Date July 7/14  
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Witness [Signature]  
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[Signature]  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*MD*  
*Chair - Hearing Committee of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia*