

Statement on Public Health Misinformation

4/30/2021

1 MIN READ



There have been isolated incidents of physicians using social media to spread blatant misinformation and undermine public health measures meant to protect all of us. In response, the College released the statement below. The statement is intended to focus on professional behaviour and is not intended to stifle a healthy public debate about how to best address aspects of the pandemic. Rather, our focus is on addressing those arguments that reject scientific evidence and seek to rouse emotions over reason. We continue to recognize the important roles physicians can play by advocating for change in a socially accountable manner.

CPSO Statement:

The College is aware and concerned about the increase of misinformation circulating on social media and other platforms regarding physicians who are publicly contradicting public health orders and recommendations. Physicians hold a unique position of trust with the public and have a professional responsibility to not communicate [anti-vaccine](#), anti-masking, anti-distancing and anti-lockdown statements and/or promoting unsupported, unproven treatments for COVID-19. Physicians must not make comments or provide advice that encourages the public to act contrary to public health orders and recommendations. Physicians who put the public at risk may face an investigation by the CPSO and disciplinary action, when warranted. When offering opinions, physicians must be guided by the law, regulatory standards, and the code of ethics and professional conduct. The information shared must not be misleading or deceptive and must be supported by available evidence and science.