

Patients need more

It didn't take former massage therapist Fernando Vigon-Campuzano long to run afoul of the regulatory body that licenses him.

He received his licence to practise in March 2013. By 2014 the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario already had reasons to send an undercover investigator to his Peel Region practice to act as a patient.

She alleges he groped her. But instead of holding him to account publicly and stripping him of his licence, the college's complaints committee chose simply to caution him behind closed doors and order him to take a remedial program. As the Star's Jacques Gallant reports, Vigon-Campuzano now faces three criminal counts of sexually assaulting patients, at least two of whom were allegedly abused in 2016, two years after the complaints committee dealt with him in secret. Add this disturbing case to a long list where colleges regulating health professionals seemed to prioritize the rights of their members to practice over the safety and security of patients.

It has to stop. But sadly the half-baked changes proposed in new legislation to update the Regulated Health Professions Act won't protect patients from abusive health professionals.

A response to persistent controversy, Bill 87 would give the health minister a say in the composition of the college disciplinary committees meant to hold health professionals to account. That falls well short of the key recommendation in a taskforce report, delivered last September, which called on the provincial government to establish a completely independent body, the Ontario Safety and Patient Protection Authority, to investigate complaints of sexual abuse by all regulated health professionals.

The report came in the wake of a series of investigative stories in the Star that detailed numerous cases of dirty doctors who were still being allowed to practice by the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons.

If the oversight body existed, Vigon-Campuzano's case, for example, would have gone to a committee of experts with no vested interest in protecting the reputations and licences of their members.

An independent authority, too, could help end the secrecy under which colleges too often operate. The massage therapists college, for example, refuses to say why it didn't forward the undercover investigator's allegation to a disciplinary committee rather than the complaints committee. It also refuses to say why it sent an investigator in the first place. In fact, it won't talk about this particular case at all.

As medical malpractice lawyer Amani Oakley put it: What a violation of public trust, to let someone like this continue to practice, rather than ensuring the safety of the public and revoking his licence in a public manner.

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Letters to the editor

Someone is always offended

Imagine being targeted by those around you because of something that defines you, something that gives you strength, courage, and hope, something that you would never dream of changing.

How would you feel if your innocent actions were under the constant watch of others because of the mistakes of those who claim to be your brothers and sisters?

This is the omnipresent challenge that Muslim students face almost daily, especially on their holy day.

Recently, there has been great debate on whether Muslim students should be allowed to pray in Peel District School Board schools. Some groups claim that these religious activities encourage radicalism, however, is deliberately destroying a sacred book to prove one's point not a radical move?

There is nothing wrong with letting Muslim students pray at a place where they feel safe. This practice is just like any other extracurricular ac-

tivity at school. Students are supervised by teachers and no extra fees are incurred by the school board. Ultimately, halting Muslim prayers in schools because of harsh stereotypes and prejudice is unnecessary.

A Muslim prayer service is the same as any other club, whether it be an Anime Club, a Drama Club or a sports team. Groups of people gather together to celebrate and participate in a common interest.

If we ban the Muslim prayer service, we should also ban all other clubs and activities at school. One could get offended by the character an actor is portraying in a school play. Music being played by the school band could bring back bad memories to an audience member. Tight fitting football pants may be offensive to some people.

There is always going to be a community member who is offended by something. There is no evidence to prove that Muslims are as violent and ruthless as some claim. The Muslims that have caused fear and destruction around the world are, in reality, extremists who are in no way following the teachings of the Holy

Qur'an.

If people want to keep religion out of schools, should we not cancel all religious holidays to make it fair for all?

Christmas, Good Friday and Easter Monday are all Christian holidays. Why are they being celebrated with school closures?

Muslim prayers have a place in Peel schools. These practices are as harmless as any other extracurricular activity.

Natasha Martin,
Grade 10 student

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