

# GEORGETOWN DOCTOR WHO SHOWED OFF NAKED SELFIES GUILTY OF SEX ABUSE

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**WARNING: Graphic details follow.**

A Georgetown doctor sexually abused 11 female patients by showing them naked pictures of himself, a discipline body ruled this week.

Dr. Nigel Mark Phipps had admitted from the outset of his discipline hearing last year at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) that he had shown the patients naked and seminaked selfies on his cellphone and that this constituted professional misconduct.

He denied, however, that it was sexual abuse. A five-member panel of the college's discipline committee has ruled otherwise.

Aside from the findings about the photos themselves, the discipline committee also found Phipps' behaviour to be sexual in nature and that he had an erection during two patients' visits. One of the patients was touched by the doctor's erection through his clothing, the committee found.

"Physicians must establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries with patients or the professional relationship is jeopardized and patients are at risk of great harm," the committee wrote in its 85-page decision.

"Violations of such boundaries, particularly of a sexual nature, can engender in patients a loss of trust in the physician and in the health professions and feelings of betrayal, victimization, anger, shame and guilt."

Phipps' lawyer, Jenny Stephenson, declined the Toronto Star's request for comment.

The photos Phipps admitted to showing are as follows: one where Phipps is naked with his penis visible, one of Phipps' naked buttocks, one where he's naked from the groin up but where the genitals are not visible, and a fourth showing him naked with a towel over his arm. The first three were filed as exhibits at the discipline hearing, while Phipps admitted to deleting the fourth from his cellphone.

(The committee found



Bernard Weil/Toronto Star

Dr. Nigel Mark Phipps had denied committing sexual abuse though he admitted from the outset his actions constituted professional misconduct.

that Phipps showed additional naked photographs to five of the patients, which he denied.)

"I thought they would think what I thought . . . I thought it was humorous, innocuous," the 57-year-old doctor testified in his own defence last year regarding most of the encounters.

He said he wanted to share with patients what he thought was a "funny" story of a stranger accidentally seeing one of the naked selfies several years ago. "Through counselling, I realize people don't think what you think," he said.

A number of patients testified they felt embar-

rassed, violated, and confused when their doctor showed them the photos in the examination room. "A strong yuck factor," was how one patient put it in an agreed statement of facts filed at the hearing.

"Dr. Phipps asserted consistently that his intention was to relate a story that was humorous and mutually embarrassing, and with which everyone 'would be fine,'" the panel wrote in its decision. "The committee, however, could not understand why Dr. Phipps would find showing a naked photo of himself to his patients humorous or why he would want to em-

barrass his patients."

The discipline committee concluded the photos were sexual in nature, given that two of them showed Phipps' genitalia, one of which shows a "partial erection," and that they were meant to be shared with his wife.

His behaviour was also found to be sexual in nature, as Phipps himself acknowledged making comments to several patients such as "I've seen yours, now you've seen mine" or "I've seen you naked, now you've seen me naked."

Phipps had also admitted to professional misconduct for showing the photo

of himself naked from the waist up to three staff members on the same day - an admission the discipline committee accepted.

A penalty hearing will be scheduled at a later date. Phipps retains an active licence to practise, but since 2015 has been barred from practising on women unless in the presence of a health care professional.

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