

LOGAN SKIN CLINIC

Dr. Peter Elliott

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Diseases of the Skin

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Dr Hugh Bartholomeusz
Royal Australian College of Surgeons
Queensland Regional Office
50 Water Street
Spring Hill Qld 4004

Dear Dr Bartholomeusz

With regard to your membership of our Credentialing and Clinical Privileges Committee, we ask that you step down as a member for the following possible breaches of protocol as defined by the Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Healthcare. *Standard for Credentialling and Defining the Scope of Clinical Practice*, July 2004 as cited as a reference for our credentialing policy document.

The protocols are:

- ❖ 7.2 (i) "should ensure that nominee members understand that their role is to bring to the committee experience and expertise relevant to the nominating organisation and its members, rather than to act as a representative of the nominating organisation."
- ❖ 7.4.1 "Specifically, the committee must conduct itself according to the rules of natural justice, without conflicts of interest or bias, and in a manner, which does not breach relevant legislation, including **privacy**, trade practices, whistleblower or equal opportunity legislation.

Equity and merit must form the basis of all phases of the process of credentialing and defining the scope of clinical practice."

- ❖ 7.4.1 (j) "... where the decision-maker is in competition with the person under review and stands to benefit from any negative outcome for the person under review;"
- ❖ 7.4.1 "Members of the committee responsible for credentialing and defining scope of clinical practice should disqualify themselves from acting on any matter before the committee if they have a material personal (including but not limited to a pecuniary) interest in the outcome of the matter. They should also consider the desirability of disqualifying themselves if they have any apparent or perceived personal interest in the outcome."
- ❖ 7.4.2 (b) "... is required to disclose any potential conflict of interest;"
- ❖ 7.4.2 (c) "... is excluded from participating in the relevant proceedings, and the reasons for such exclusion are documented ..."
- ❖ 7.4.2 (d) With regard to negative credentialing outcomes - "... an opportunity to appear before the committee and represent their case;"



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feel that you brought preconceived ideas to this meeting, therefore dismissing the rules of natural justice and equity and that you did not excuse yourself on the grounds of a potential conflict of interest. We also draw your attention to 8.2 (f) and (g) where the standard discuss the minimum credentials of applicants "... rather than the possession of specific endorsement or accreditation by named professional colleges, associations or societies;"

You plainly announced that you were representing the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and therefore were not acting in the true spirit of the process in assessing individual doctor knowledge, skills and experience. (See 7.2 (i))

Lastly, you breached our faith and the privacy of these proceedings when you sent out a press release and further discussed the outcomes of this meeting with the general media. Clinical Privileges and Credentialing Meetings are supposed to be fully secure and confidential. We feel fortunate in that you got the name of our organisation incorrect and therefore saved us further embarrassment.

We feel that your appointment to our committee was to serve some form of political agenda and we deeply resent being a part of this action.

We also realise that we made some mistakes and these have now been rectified, including:

- ❖ 7.2 (h) "..... at least one medical practitioner who practises in the field and specialty relevant to the scope of clinical practice being requested .." We realise that we should have, for reasons of equity, invited a member of both the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery to attend and represent these applicants.

Confidentiality and Commitment

Our Credentialing and Clinical Privileges Policy document has been updated to include the following criteria:

- ❖ 7.6 (a) "establish policies and procedures that protect the confidentiality of its proceedings;"
- ❖ 7.6 (c) "require all members to sign an undertaking before joining the committee to abide by these policies and procedures."

Finally, we felt we were left with little choice but to support your stand concerning these applicants, when you stated that should we disagree then you "would be forced to write a full report to the AMC and Department of Health stating our opposition" and that recognised (inferred RACS) surgeons would boycott our organisation should we credential persons with no RACS affiliation (or similar) and that you had some influence in these matters. These threats are not only perceived by us as unprofessional but also damaging to our ongoing growth and development should they become public.

We look forward to your resignation in due course.

Yours faithfully

Dr P D Elliott
Director
Logan Skin Clinic & Logan Surgery Centre

Sister J E Koboroff
CEO/Practice Manager
Logan Skin Clinic & Logan Surgery Centre

Cc:

1. Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
2. Department of Health, Private Health Unit