

# College of Dental Surgeons of Alberta

## Hearing Tribunal Decision

March 27, 2023

### IN ACCORDANCE WITH BYLAW 19(7) OF THE COLLEGE OF DENTAL SURGEONS OF ALBERTA

On February 25, 2023, a Hearing Tribunal of the College of Dental Surgeons of Alberta found Dr. Erin Ellis guilty of unprofessional conduct and she was sanctioned. A Hearing Tribunal is an independent group of decision makers comprised of two members of the public appointed by the Government of Alberta and two dentists registered in Alberta.

Dr. Ellis admitted that she failed to appropriately consider and address her patient's chief complaint. Dr. Ellis had undertaken extensive work, such as crowns on healthy teeth, to treat a patient suffering from headaches without considering less intrusive strategies to identify and treat that source of pain. Dr. Ellis admitted that she failed to obtain sufficient informed consent from the patient prior to proceeding with treatment.

The Hearing Tribunal noted that when a patient seeks treatment for pain, a dentist ought to treat that pain first and find the source of that pain. A dentist ought not jump in with highly invasive and advanced treatment options at the outset, before considering less invasive strategies to identify and treat the source of pain. The Hearing Tribunal found that informed consent includes ensuring that all options are presented to the patient on the basis of accurate information, that the options presented address the patient's chief complaints, and that the patient be provided with alternative and less intrusive treatment options where available.

### ORDERS OF THE HEARING TRIBUNAL

The Hearing Tribunal accepted a Joint Submission on Penalty from the parties and issued the following orders on sanction:

1. Dr. Ellis shall receive a reprimand and the written decision of the Hearing Tribunal shall serve as the reprimand;
2. Dr. Ellis shall pay a fine of \$8,000; and
3. There will be coaching and mentorship of Dr. Ellis by a dental expert, who will discuss the issues in this case, including reviewing radiographs and discussing the taking and interpretation of radiographs.