

COLLEGE OF PHARMACISTS OF MANITOBA

IN THE MATTER OF: *The Pharmaceutical Act, CCSM c P60*

AND IN THE MATTER OF: **MICHAEL WATTS**, a pharmacist registered with
the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba

To: Michael Watts
[REDACTED]

DECISION AND ORDER OF THE DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

Pursuant to a Notice of Hearing dated April 3, 2025, (the “Notice”) a hearing was convened by the Discipline Committee of the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba (the “College”) at the offices of Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP, 242 Hargrave Street, Suite #17, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 0V1, on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, with respect to charges formulated by the College alleging that Michael Watts (“Watts”), being a pharmacist under the provisions of *The Pharmaceutical Act*, C.C.S.M. c.P60 (the “Act”) and a registrant of the College, is guilty of professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming a member, or have displayed a lack of knowledge or skill or judgment in the practice of pharmacy or operation of a pharmacy, or any of the above, as described in section 54 of the Act, in that, at Brothers Pharmacy, 542 Selkirk Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba (the “Pharmacy”):

1. Between February 2022 and June 2022, you entered into an inappropriate relationship with a vulnerable patient, [REDACTED], in contravention of Statements VI, VII, VIII and X of the *Code of Ethics* (the “Code”), and the *Guideline for Professional Boundaries in Therapeutic Relationships* (the “Guideline”), or any of them; and
2. Between 2021 and 2022, you entered into an inappropriate relationship with a vulnerable and/or vulnerable former patient, [REDACTED], in contravention of Statements VI, VII, VIII and X of the Code, and the Guideline, or any of them.

The hearing into the charges convened on June 24, 2025. Mr. Jeffrey Hirsch and Ms. Sharyne Hamm appeared as counsel on behalf of the Complaints Committee (the “Committee”). Ms. Jackie Collins appeared on behalf of Watts. Mr. Joseph A. Pollock appeared as counsel to the Discipline Committee (the “Panel”).

A Statement of Agreed Facts (the “Statement”) was filed in which Watts admitted:

1. his membership in the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba (the “College”).
2. the Notice was issued on April 3, 2025;
3. valid service of the Notice and that the College has complied with the requirements of sub-sections 46(2) and 46(3) of *The Pharmaceutical Act*, CCSM c. P60 (the “Act”);
4. he had no objection to any of the Panel members, nor to legal counsel to the Panel on the basis of bias, a reasonable apprehension of bias, or a conflict of interest;
5. he graduated with his pharmacy degree from The University of Manitoba in 2006;
6. he has been registered as a pharmacist under the Act since June 29, 2006;
7. at all times material to this proceeding, he was a member of the College as a practising pharmacist in Manitoba;
8. on January 30, 2019, he was issued a censure as a result of a complaint alleging that he entered into an inappropriate relationship with a female employee and displayed other inappropriate behaviour with staff and patients;
9. on April 24, 2020, he was issued a reminder letter as a result of a complaint involving non-pharmacist staff dispensing and witnessing methadone doses;
10. on February 27, 2023, he was issued a reminder letter as a result of a complaint alleging an inappropriate relationship with a patient that took place in 2016, which advised him that he was to maintain a professional relationship with each patient and of his responsibilities and obligations to respect boundaries. The Complaints Committee closed this complaint and other than the reminder letter, no further action was initiated by the Complaints Committee;
11. he reviewed the Notice as well as this Statement, and admits the truth and accuracy of the facts in the Statement, and that the witnesses and other evidence available to the College would, if called and otherwise tendered, be substantially in accordance with these facts.

I. Plea

Watts tendered no evidence and made no submissions on the issue of professional misconduct, other than to admit that the conduct described in the Notice demonstrated professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming a member, and a lack of knowledge or skill or judgment in the practice of pharmacy as described in section 54 of the Act.

Watts entered a plea of guilty to Counts 1 and 2 as set out in the Notice. He agreed that his admissions and guilty pleas were voluntary, informed and unequivocal. He confirmed that he understood that by pleading guilty, he was giving up his right to contest the factual accuracy of the allegations made against him in the Notice.

Watts confirmed his understanding that even though a joint recommendation was made with respect to the appropriate sanction, the Panel - subject to the law applying to joint recommendations - was not bound to follow the joint recommendation, and that the Panel would determine the appropriate penalty after considering the evidence and the submissions of counsel.

Counsel for Watts and the Committee jointly agreed that Watts:

- (a) pay a fine of \$7,500.00;
- (b) would have a restriction on his pharmacist's license that he be prohibited from being a pharmacy manager or preceptor for a period of two years from the date of the Discipline Committee's decision;
- (c) pay a contribution to costs of the investigation and hearing in the amount of \$15,000.00; and
- (d) pay the fine and costs within two years of the Panel's Decision and Order.

Counsel for the Committee submitted that the decision of the Panel ought to be published and made available to the public, including publication of Watts' name.

Counsel for the Committee submitted that Watts ought to be suspended from the practice of pharmacy for 8.5 months, with a credit for the 6 months and 25 days during which he had his license interim suspended. Counsel for Watts submitted that he ought to be suspended from the practice of pharmacy for an additional 2 weeks beyond the 6 months and 25 days during which he had his license interim suspended.

II. Decision

After reviewing the authorities, documentary evidence, the Statement, and hearing the submissions of counsel for the Committee and Watts, the Panel:

- 1. finds that pursuant to section 54 of the Act, Watts is guilty of professional misconduct.
- 3. accepts Watts' plea of guilty to Counts 1 to 2 as set out in the Notice.
- 4. accepts the joint submission of counsel that Watts:
 - (a) pay a fine of \$7,500.00;
 - (b) will have a restriction on his pharmacist's license that he be prohibited from being a pharmacy manager or preceptor for a period of two years from the date of this Panel's Decision and Order;
 - (c) pay a contribution to costs of the investigation and hearing in the amount of \$15,000.00; and
 - (d) pay the fine and costs within two years of this Panel's Decision and Order.

The Panel accepts the submission of Counsel for the Committee that Watts be suspended from the practice of pharmacy for 8.5 months, with a credit for the 6 months and 25 days during which he had his license interim suspended.

Lastly, the Panel hereby orders that the decision of this Panel is to be published and made available to the public, including publication of Watts' name.

In making this decision, this Panel wishes to note the following:

- 1. The Panel's decision not only achieves each of the main principles of sentencing, including denunciation, punishment, and specific deterrence for Mr. Watts, but it also addresses the principle of general deterrence to dissuade other registrants from engaging in similar misconduct, while at

the same time recognizing and providing for Mr. Watts' potential rehabilitation.

2. The Panel acknowledges that Mr. Watts' guilty plea reflects his acknowledgment of the seriousness of the charges, and that the Panel's order appropriately balances Mr. Watts' acknowledgment while reflecting the seriousness of the conduct which gave rise to those charges.

3. Mr. Watts has already completed the PROBE Ethics program since his initial suspension in 2022.

4. The fine and period of suspension denounces Mr. Watts' conduct, and the publication of the Decision will ensure that such denunciation is clearly communicated to the College's membership and to the public.

5. While the contribution to costs of \$15,000.00 represents only a small percentage of the College's actual and anticipated costs, it also reflects Mr. Watts' cooperation with the investigation and with the hearing.

6. The proposed penalty falls within a range of sentences for similar conduct arising from previous decisions.

7. Taken together, the elements of the proposed disposition will illustrate to the public that the College strives to uphold the highest standards of practice in the public interest. and will maintain the public's confidence in the profession's ability to properly supervise the conduct of its members.

III. Order

This Panel hereby orders that Watts:

1. is guilty of professional misconduct as set out in Counts 1 and 2 of the Notice.
2. pay a fine of \$7,500.00 within two years of this Order;
3. have a restriction placed on his pharmacist's licence that he be prohibited from being a pharmacy manager or preceptor for a period of two years from the date of this Panel's Decision and Order;
4. pay a contribution to costs of the investigation and hearing in the amount of \$15,000.00, within two years of this Order; and
5. be suspended from the practice of pharmacy for 8.5 months, with a credit for the 6 months and 25 days during which he had his license interim suspended, which suspension shall begin as of August 31, 2025.

Lastly, the Panel hereby orders that the decision of this Panel is to be published and made available to the public, including publication of Watts' name.

DATED at Winnipeg, Manitoba this 11th day of July, 2025.

THE COLLEGE OF PHARMACISTS OF MANITOBA

Per:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Glenda Marsh", is enclosed in a rectangular box.

Glenda Marsh
Chair, Discipline Panel

TO: Michael Watts