



Canada: B.C. Advances Law That Will Jail Doctors for 'Misinformation'

Description

Lawmakers in British Columbia have advanced legislation that could lead to prison time for doctors who give advice that goes against federal guidelines and narratives. The Health Professions and Occupations Act (HPOA) was approved by the legislature last Thursday and immediately received Royal Assent.

The new legislation is aimed at replacing the Health Professions Act in British Columbia and will make significant changes to how all health professions are regulated. It now awaits a cabinet order to determine when it will be enacted.

The Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms — a Canadian civil rights watchdog group — has sounded the alarm over the bill. Among issues cited were mandatory vaccine requirements on all health practitioners for any illness the government deems necessary, as well as harsh criminal penalties and fines for doctors found to have spread “false or misleading information.”

“Bill 36 contains provisions, which if enacted, will permit the Health Minister to appoint College Boards who must unilaterally establish vaccination requirements on all health practitioners for any illness the government deems requires vaccination, and to impose proof of up-to-date vaccination status as a condition of licensing,” wrote the Justice Centre in a press release.

“College registrars would be empowered to dismiss any application for licensing or renewal of license that does not contain proof of vaccination without notice or without a regulatory hearing. The legislation contains provisions that would allow the College to discipline any dissenters; those who speak out against the College policies or who fail to comply, with loss of license,” the release continued. “It further enables the College to make “without notice” applications to the court to obtain orders of compliance, orders for entry into premises to search, seize or copy property, orders to secure premises and prevent an owner from entry, to order fines for non-compliance of up to \$200,000, as well as to order jail time for up to six months if a healthcare worker is deemed to have made a false or misleading statement.”

The Justice Centre describes the bill as an “end run around democratic checks and balances.”

Full text of the bill can be viewed [here](#).

Section 259 (“Summary protection orders”) states that health professionals can be suspended or have their licenses revoked provide “false or misleading information to patients or the public.”

If it is deemed that “a person who acts on the information is at significant risk of harm” or providing the information is deemed to be a “health hazard” under the Public Health Act, health professionals will be punished. The Public Health Act classifies any activity that “is likely to interfere, with the suppression of infectious agents or hazardous agents” as a health hazard, Slay News **reported**.

Bill 36 also fails to define what constitutes “false or misleading information.”

During the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, several doctors were censored or had their licenses suspended for statements that turned out to be true.

by CULLEN MCCUE

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