

DOCTOR SUSPENDED FOR COMING FORWARD ABOUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Dr. Ana Safavi was suspended by the Northern Ontario School of Medicine – for reporting sexual harassment

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA, February 14, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- An Ontario doctor has been suspended for reporting allegations of sexual harassment.

Dr. Ana Safavi was suspended from the Northern Ontario School of Medicine's (NOSM) Internal Medicine residency program on February 2, after she disclosed that she had been sexually harassed by a faculty leader in her training program.

In the extraordinary letter NOSM sent to Dr. Safavi on February 2, the school states: "Your return to work is conditional upon you providing, in writing, a list of safe and unsafe workplaces based on where you might reasonably expect to encounter the alleged harasser." She has until midnight on February 15 to provide the list to NOSM's Associate Dean of Postgraduate Education, who also directed Dr. Safavi to engage in "reflection and self-care."

Dr. Safavi maintains that this list of places, when combined with what she has already revealed, would enable NOSM to identify her harasser. "I want to cooperate, but I'm scared. There is a lot at stake here, and before I name him, I just want to make sure that there is a transparent and fair process for everybody involved." She is rightly requesting that an experienced and truly independent third-party investigator be appointed – as NOSM originally agreed to, before trying to impose their own investigator on the process.

"I came here to learn and to treat patients; practicing medicine is what I love," said Dr. Safavi, "But when the persistent harassment I have experienced at NOSM escalated to sexual harassment, I knew I had to come forward."

Dr. Safavi was on a work placement in the Emergency Department at Health Sciences North (HSN) in Sudbury, when she was suspended. The hospital was not consulted in the decision and has no say in her re-instatement. "Ana is beloved by patients, nurses, and physicians alike. She represents the very best of HSN," says Dr. Chris Bourdon, who was present as a support person to Dr. Safavi when she disclosed the nature of the harassment to NOSM. He is also VP of Medical & Academic Affairs and former Chief of Staff at the hospital. Dr. Safavi credits her "HSN family" for giving her the courage to speak up, and the #MeToo movement for raising her awareness of how institutional cultures can enable harassment by silencing victims. She hopes that NOSM will emulate HSN's proactive approach to culture change.

Dr. Safavi concluded by saying she expects immediate reinstatement, but she continues to have concerns about the fairness of NOSM's process – and also possible recrimination for raising her voice.

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) is a medical school hosted by two universities: Lakehead University in Thunder Bay and Laurentian University in Sudbury. The School is registered

as a not-for-profit corporation with its academic affairs connected to both host universities.

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Andrew Tumilty
Daisy Group
416-642-3100 ext. 227
[email us here](#)

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