

College alleges Burnaby man practised dentistry illegally; shut down by regulator

August 7, 2013

VANCOUVER, B.C. The College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia (CDSBC) has seized a significant amount of dental equipment from a man who appears to have been practising dentistry illegally. The equipment and material seized may not have been cleaned or sterilized properly and much of it may not meet Health Canada standards.

CDSBC was alerted when a woman who said she was a patient of Tung Sheng Wu (also known as David Wu) complained about the treatment she received from him. The College determined he was not a registered dentist and hired a private investigator to conduct surveillance at a residence on Southwood Street in Burnaby.

The investigation provided evidence that Mr. Wu was practising dentistry illegally. CDSBC sought a court order to enter the premises to gather evidence to obtain an injunction to stop him practising and to confiscate any dental equipment and supplies. CDSBC investigators and the RCMP entered the residence on May 29, 2013 and found a dental office in a bedroom, along with approximately 1,500 client files.

Mr. Wu's dental practice did not meet CDSBC's requirements for infection prevention and control. Fraser Health Authority is issuing a health alert and recommending that anyone who has been treated by Mr. Wu get tested for Hepatitis B virus, Hepatitis C virus and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Mr. Wu may have been practising as far back as the 1990s. Prior to the Burnaby location, he operated out of a residence in Port Moody.

While its primary role is to monitor the conduct and competence of its registrants, CDSBC will also take action to protect the public from illegal practitioners. The illegal practice of dentistry presents a risk to public health and safety because there are no assurances that the practitioner is appropriately trained or competent to provide the services of a dentist.

Members of the public can use CDSBC's online directory of dentists to check that their dentist is registered to practise in B.C.

Mr. Wu allegedly relied on word-of-mouth referrals, specifically within the Chinese-Canadian community.

QUOTES

Dr. Michelle Murti, Medical Health Officer, Fraser Health Authority

“Because Mr. Wu was not a licensed dentist and because he was not following the infection control procedures expected of a licensed dentist, we believe there is sufficient risk of exposure to blood-borne viruses to recommend testing for all clients.”

Dr. Peter Stevenson-Moore, President, College of Dental Surgeons of BC

“All dentists registered with CDSBC are required to adhere to the standards we set for quality patient care. The material seized from Mr. Wu’s residence does not come close to meeting our standards for infection control, which leads us to believe that he has put his clients’ health at risk for his own gain.”

Jerome Marburg, Registrar/CEO, College of Dental Surgeons of BC

“Mr. Wu is neither licensed nor competent to practice dentistry. If you received treatment from him, we urge you to visit a real dentist to have any unsafe materials he used removed and to get proper dental treatment.”

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Medical Health Officers Warn Public of Potential Exposure to Serious Viruses due to Identification of Unlicensed Dental Practitioner

Fraser Health is alerting the public that Tung Sheng Wu (also known as David Wu) has been performing dental procedures illegally. Based on the College of Dental Surgeons of B.C.'s investigation, instruments used were not properly cleaned or sterilized, therefore there is a chance that individuals who have received dental procedures from Mr. Wu could have been exposed to blood-borne viruses.

As a precaution, it is recommended that **all** clients of Mr. Wu get tested for Hepatitis B virus, Hepatitis C virus and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Testing is completed by a simple blood test.

We are asking that everyone who has ever received treatment from Mr. Wu to please contact a public health nurse through our toll-free hotline at **1-855-895-7425**. The public health nurse will provide you with information about testing. If you do not have provincial health care coverage, you can arrange to have this testing done for free from public health by calling the hotline.

Where client records are available, letters are being sent to alert clients of their potential exposure and advising them to contact public health.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a preventable liver disease. It ranges in severity from a mild illness, lasting a few weeks, to a serious long-term illness that can lead to liver disease or liver cancer.

About ninety per cent of adults who become infected with hepatitis B completely recover from the infection after approximately six months. During this time of acute infection, people can either be symptom free or get sick with signs and symptoms such as: feeling very tired, mild fever, headache, not wanting to eat, feeling sick to your stomach or vomiting, belly pain, diarrhea or constipation, muscle aches and joint pain, skin rash and yellowing of the skin and eyeballs (jaundice).

For more information about hepatitis B:

<http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/kb/content/major/hw40968.html#tp13734>

Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is a preventable disease of the liver. Symptoms of acute hepatitis C infection can include: feeling very tired, joint pain, belly pain, itchy skin, sore muscles, dark urine and yellowing of the skin and eyeballs (jaundice). Since symptoms are commonly absent many people are unaware that they have hepatitis C until some time after they have been infected.

It is important to recognize that hepatitis C can cause a variety of symptoms that are highly variable – people with chronic hepatitis C can feel fine and have no symptoms, however others will suffer from quite severe symptoms.

For more information about hepatitis C:

<http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/kb/content/major/hw144584.html#hw144586>

HIV

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that attacks the immune system, the body's natural defense system. Without a strong immune system, the body has trouble fighting off disease. Both the virus and the infection it causes are called HIV.

White blood cells are an important part of the immune system. HIV invades and destroys certain white blood cells and if too many white blood cells are destroyed, the body can no longer defend itself against infection.

Without treatment, HIV infection progresses and when advanced, AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) can develop. Having HIV does not mean you have AIDS. Even without treatment, it takes a long time for HIV to progress to AIDS—usually 10 to 12 years. If HIV is diagnosed before it becomes AIDS, medicines can slow or stop the damage to the immune system and AIDS may not develop. With treatment, many people with HIV live long and active lives.

For more information about HIV:

<http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/kb/content/major/hw151408.html#hw151411>