



Science should leave room for discussion

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Recently, the Justice Centre published an [article](#) on discipline threats made by Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, in several provinces, against doctors who reported what they saw in their offices: that not all government responses to Covid were helpful, and some caused significant harm. A recent [video](#) features Dr. Charles Hoffe (BC), Dr. Roger Hodgkinson (AB), Dr. Francis Christian (SK) and Dr. Chris Milburn (NS), each of whom recounts loss of employment, or facing discipline from his provincial College, simply for pointing to inconvenient facts that do not fit the dominant narrative.

Nova Scotia's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Robert Stang, has revealed his contempt for Canadian *Charter* freedoms. At a June press conference, he lamented to media that a judge had lifted Nova Scotia's injunction that banned public gatherings, which the province had prohibited.

But Dr. Stang's support for the injunction is not limited to health reasons. Disturbingly, he stated: "The other purpose of the injunction is to prevent groups that are spreading, deliberately spreading false information that can actually create risk; the information itself, if listened to, creates risks to the public as well. [There's] a need to manage that misinformation."

Really? The purpose of the court order banning peaceful protests was not based on health reasons, but was a deliberate violation of Nova

Scotians' *Charter* rights to peaceful assembly and free speech?

Dr. Stang's position is deeply discouraging. Canadians are constantly told to trust science – to which debate, questioning and testing are foundational. Dr. Stang however, and provincial Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons across Canada who share his ideas, leave no room for discussion.

They should. Politics has influenced health advice. Since March 2020, medical experts and politicians have directed Canadians with great certainty, and often to their detriment. For a full account, see the Justice Centre paper summarizing [evidence](#) presented in court by Dr. Jay Bhattacharya on behalf of JCCF clients in Manitoba.

We assume the best of public officials. But as a group, their predictive record should incline them to modesty and transparency about their decision making. And their public health prescriptions should be considered with extreme care by the elected officials responsible for enforcing them. The coercive power of the state, and matters such as who may meet with whom, how often and what they may say, has little to do with science or medicine.