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Indicted doctor steps down

- GREG TUTTLE Of The Gazette Staff
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A Billings Clinic physician charged last year with a sex offense has resigned from the hospital.

Dr. Patrick Muffley was put on administrative leave after his arrest at the hospital Sept. 20 on a warrant from Gallia County, Ohio. The warrant resulted from a criminal indictment in the Gallia County Court of Common Pleas that charged the obstetrician-gynecologist with gross sexual imposition.

Billings Clinic spokesman Luke Kobold said Wednesday that Muffley has resigned his position. Kobold said he was prevented by hospital policy from saying when Muffley tendered his resignation. Muffley had worked for five months at Billings Clinic before his arrest, after which he was placed on administrative leave.

Paul Scarsella, a prosecutor with the Ohio Attorney General's Office, said Wednesday that the criminal case against Muffley is scheduled for trial March 20. The criminal indictment issued April 20, 2007, alleges that Muffley had sexual contact with a woman who is named in court records "by force or threat of force." The alleged offense occurred between April 17 and April 24, 2006, the indictment states.

Douglas Graff, Muffley's attorney in Columbus, Ohio, could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Muffley, 37, began working at Billings Clinic on May 15, 2007, after passing a hospital background check. Hospital officials have said the Ohio indictment did not surface during the check.

Before joining Billings Clinic, Muffley worked at the Holzer Clinic in Gallipolis, Ohio. Clinic officials said Muffley joined that staff in October 2004 and resigned in February 2007.

Muffley was booked into the Yellowstone County jail after his arrest. He was released a few days later when Ohio authorities agreed to let him return voluntarily to that state. He appeared in the Gallia County courtroom on Sept. 28 and pleaded not guilty. He was released on a \$10,000 bond.

Brad Arndorfer, a Billings attorney who represented Muffley at his initial court appearance in Billings, said in September that the criminal allegation against Muffley did not involve a patient.