

THE BUFFALO NEWS

CHILD ABUSE REVEALED IN DOCTOR'S PAST UNAWARE OF RECORD, HEALTH DEPT. SAYS

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Published October 28, 1992

A convicted child abuser whose medical license was recently approved by the state practiced in Cattaraugus County earlier this year without revealing his history of sexual abuse.

That misrepresentation might allow embarrassed officials of the state Health Department to reinstate charges against Dr. Ronald Tauber, a gynecologist.

The New York Post reported Wednesday that the state Health Department, in a 2-1 vote by two doctors and a lawyer, voted in August to allow Tauber to work in the state. The medical panel made the recommendation despite the fact that Tauber had served seven years in a Michigan prison for sexually abusing a 6-year-old girl.

But the medical panel and state health officials apparently were unaware that Tauber also admitted to exposing himself to more than 700 women and children over more than 20 years, the Post reported.

On Wednesday, The Buffalo News learned that Tauber may have concealed his conviction and other facts when he applied to a doctor-referral agency in Georgia. That agency placed Tauber with the Guthrie Medical Group in Portville, where he worked for the first half of this year.

Tauber did general practice care in Portville, but did not see children or work as a gynecologist, according to the Guthrie Group.

The state Health Department has allowed Tauber to practice but stipulated he cannot treat patients younger than 18 or even let them in his office, Faith Schottenfeld, department spokeswoman, said.

If Tauber misrepresented his past, the Health Department could conduct another investigation and could bar him from practicing in the state.

"We're actively looking at a number of things, and that's one of them," said Health Department spokesman Peter Slocum.

The incident is embarrassing to the Health Department because the department recently won the exclusive right to investigate and discipline doctors in the state. The Tauber case was a hot topic in the state Education Department Wednesday because education officials were taken out of the doctor-disciplinary process because of claims that they were too lenient toward doctors. Tauber lost his California license because of his 1982 conviction, and Florida revoked his privileges after a young woman died in a botched abortion, the Post said.

Health Department officials considered revoking his privileges before the medical advisory panel voted in August to allow Tauber to practice in the state.

Tauber worked in Portville in place of Dr. Duncan Wormer, who was temporarily sidelined by knee surgery.

Guthrie spokesman Frank Oliver said Tauber's resume did not reveal his conviction. If Guthrie officials had known the full story, he would not have been hired, Oliver said.

"Certainly the man misrepresented himself to the (referral) agency, and that's what we went on, our contract with that agency," said Mary Wormer, Wormer's wife and an employee of the group. "I'm sure they (the referral agency) didn't knowingly"

mislead the Guthrie Medical Group.

Tauber's character and personality did not reveal his past, she said. She also said no patients complained about Tauber.

Tauber's attorney, George Weinbaum, said a group practice had agreed to hire Tauber but called him Wednesday and said the offer was off the table, Weinbaum said. Tauber's landlord also called him and said he had to leave the apartment he was subleasing in New York City, Weinbaum said.
