Dentist faces sexual assault charges

Wendell Alan Racette, 64, of Delta Township

Updated: Wednesday, 26 Jan 2011, 11:14 AM EST
Published : Wednesday, 26 Jan 2011, 11:14 AM EST

LANSING, Mich. (AP) - A Michigan dentist remained in jail Tuesday on criminal sexual conduct charges involving a former male child patient.

Wendell Alan Racette, 64, faces a court hearing on the first- and second-degree charges Feb. 3. The Delta Township man faces up to life in prison if convicted.

The Lansing State Journal reported Tuesday that authorities say the charges stem from incidents between late 1996 and mid-2000 at Racette's former Lansing office. The patient was between the ages of 5 and 10 at the time.

The former patient is now 20 and contacted police in December. Racette was arraigned on the charges Monday and was being held in the Ingham County jail.

The newspaper reported Racette's license had been revoked by the state in 2001, soon after the dentist pleaded guilty to committing Medicaid fraud and treating a patient while his license was suspended.

His license was fully reinstated last year. Chris Bergstrom, Racette's attorney, said the dentist most recently practiced one day a week in Mount Pleasant.

Bergstrom told The Associated Press on Tuesday that "all the allegations are categorically and emphatically denied," but declined further comment.

The Lansing State Journal reported that officials said Racette was accused of sexual abuse twice in the 1990s, but no charges were filed. Those accusations, Lansing police Detective Elizabeth Reust said, "make us concerned there may be more victims."

The newspaper said that in 1997 a state attorney general's investigation found Racette performed shoddy work on four children between 1982 and 1994, including keeping braces on a young girl for seven years.

Information from the Lansing State Journal