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Berwyn doctor accused of fondling patients

License suspended after agency cites potential danger

By Jason Meisner | Tribune staff reporter
September 28, 2007

A Berwyn doctor has been charged with battery, and the state has suspended his license amid allegations he inappropriately touched four female patients in the last two years.

Police said Thursday they want to know if there are more alleged victims.

Ricardo Arze, 54, a general practice physician with offices in the 6900 block of Cermak Road, was arrested Tuesday and charged with four counts of misdemeanor battery, Berwyn Police Chief William Kushner said.

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He is accused of "conduct of an insulting or provocative nature" with four patients, ranging from age 23 to 52, including making inappropriate comments and touching them in ways not related to their treatment, Kushner said.

Arze's physician and surgeon license was suspended after his arrest, which came as a result of a two-month investigation by police and the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, Kushner said.

According to a statement from the state agency, the suspension was ordered "because it believes the health and safety of the public may be in danger by the continued practice of this licensee."

A hearing on the suspension is set for Oct. 9 in the Thompson Center in Chicago.

Kushner said police were notifying the public of the arrest in the hopes that more patients would come forward.

"I am certain that there are more victims out there," Kushner said. "We all felt that it was very important to shut him down while the investigation continues."

A complaint filed by state regulators in seeking the suspension lays out conduct alleged to have occurred between March 2005 and this month. In each instance, a patient went to Arze complaining of such ailments as depression, stomach pain or sleeplessness.

The complaint alleges that during treatment, Arze touched the patients' genitalia, fondled their breasts and, in some instances, asked if they were sexually aroused.

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In the most recent allegation, from a patient's visit on Sept. 13, the complaint states Arze removed the woman's blouse and brassiere without providing an examination gown, massaged the patient's back and inquired about her sexual activity.

A receptionist who answered the phone at Arze's office Thursday said he was unavailable for comment. Calls to his home were not answered.



Arze posted bail at the Berwyn police station Wednesday, Kushner said. His first court date is set for Nov. 7 in the Maybrook branch of Cook County Circuit Court.

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