

Article updated: 8/22/2011 7:47 PM

State pulls health care licenses of sex offenders

By Associated Press
The Chicago Daily Herald

Illinois on Monday yanked the licenses of 11 health care workers, including several from the suburbs, citing a new law that bars registered sex offenders and people convicted of violent felonies from working in the field.

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation released the names of the health professionals -- six doctors and five registered nurses -- after giving them 20 days to alert the department of overturned convictions.

The law, which took effect over the weekend, allows the state to permanently revoke licenses without holding a hearing. Department officials said they'll release additional names later.

"The State takes its responsibilities to protect our residents seriously," Brent E. Adams, secretary of said in a statement. "This new law establishes tough outcomes that are intended to shield Illinois patients from health care workers who have been convicted of sex offenses and certain violent crimes."

Of 11 announced Monday and posted online, nine are registered sex offenders and two others were convicted of violent crimes. The convictions of the 11 include child pornography, indecent solicitation of a child, aggravated criminal sexual abuse and battery. In at least two cases the victims were patients.

Attempts to reach the 11 health care workers Monday by The Associated Press were unsuccessful. Illinois Department of Corrections records show one is serving time at Stateville Correctional Center for felony sexual abuse, sexual assault of child patients and manufacturing child pornography.

Three doctors, all retired, declined to comment to AP. One registered nurse lives in Michigan, according to the state's sex offender registry, and didn't have a listed phone number. The others had phone numbers that were either disconnected, unlisted or rang numerous times without going to voice mail.

According to the state Department Financial and Professional Regulation, suburban health care workers on the list and their crimes were:

- Nurse Kenneth William Hayden, licensed in Lake Villa, child pornography.
- Nurse Jeffrey Lee Knapp, licensed in Elgin, second-degree criminal sexual conduct.
- Nurse Darwin S. Calipap, licensed in Beach Park, attempted sexual criminal abuse of a victim 13-17.
- Dr. Gary Lee Almy, licensed in Long Grove, six counts of aggravated criminal sexual of a victim 13-17.
- Dr. Deen Venkatesan, licensed in Darien, criminal sexual abuse and battery of a patient.
- Dr. Luis M. D'Avis, licensed in Skokie, battery of a patient.

After receiving the state's notices, several health professionals filed lawsuits against the department arguing the law shouldn't apply to them. Spokeswoman Sue Hofer said the department won't release the names in those pending cases until they've been decided in court.

The new law also allows the state to impose restrictions on doctors and others in health care after charges have been filed, but before conviction. The state can require health care workers who've been charged with sex crimes or forcible felonies to see patients only in the presence of another health care worker who acts as a chaperone.