

Bend doctor faces additional sex abuse charges

by Cheryl McDermott

A Bend doctor was arrested Monday for the third time in just over a month in connection with an ongoing investigation into allegations that he touched female patients, now totaling four, in an inappropriate and sexual manner during the course of medical examinations, police reported.

On March 6, a woman reported to Bend Police that Dr. Gilbert Brownell Lee, 56, an internist who had been practicing since 1999 at the Ponderosa Medical Center at 1558 SW Nancy Way in Bend, had inappropriately touched her during an examination.

Dr. Gilbert Brownell Lee — DCJ photo

According to Sgt. Paul Kansky, Dr. Lee was arrested that evening for third-degree sex abuse and booked into the Deschutes County Jail. A jail administrator confirmed that Lee was released the same day after he posted bond.

Later, detectives learned the same type of inappropriate sexual behavior allegedly happened to a second woman during an examination, Sgt. Kansky said. On March 26, Dr. Lee was arrested a second time, booked into jail with two more counts of third-degree sexual abuse, and released the same day when 10 percent of the \$5,000 bail was posted.

On March 30, a third woman alleged the same inappropriate touching during an examination sometime during November 2006.

On April 2, a fourth woman came forward, saying the doctor abused her during examinations between February and June 2006.

According to Sgt. Kansky, further investigation into the new allegations by the latest two women, who are reported to be over the age of 40, resulted in Lee's arrest on Monday, April 9. He was taken into custody about 1:45 p.m. and booked into the Deschutes County Jail.

The latest charges against Lee include five counts of third-degree sex abuse and three counts of harassment, Kansky said. Lee was once again released after posting bond.

Police have kept the Oregon Board of Medical Examiners Office apprised during the investigation. On March 22, the Board issued an Interim Stipulated Order stating Lee agreed to withdraw from practice pending the completion of the Board's investigation into his competency to practice medicine.

Sgt. Kansky said that no other doctors or staff members with Ponderosa Medical Center are under suspicion, and added that they have been cooperative throughout the investigation.

Any patients or other persons with additional information are asked to contact Bend Police detectives at 541.312.7974.

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