

Ex-hospital therapist pleads guilty to molesting patients

by Ray Huard and Angelica Martine

SAN DIEGO - A former Children's Hospital respiratory therapist pleaded guilty Tuesday morning to molesting former patients.

Wayne Albert Bleyle, 55, entered his pleas to eight counts of forcible lewd acts upon a child and four counts of exhibiting a minor in pornography at a hearing that was originally scheduled for his request to have his case tied elsewhere.

An explanation for the change in plea was not given. His defense attorney, Casey Donovan told the court, "This is Mr. Bleyle's decision."

Bleyle will be sentenced to 45 years and eight months in prison on July 25 as part of the plea agreement, officials said.

Superior Court Judge Kenneth So ordered Bleyle to serve 85 percent of the sentence - basically, a life sentence, according to prosecutors.

Bleyle was arrested in March 2006 after police received a tip about child pornography on the Internet.

Prosecutors later filed charges accusing him of molesting five helpless children at Rady Children's Convalescent Hospital in Kearny Mesa, where he worked for a decade.

Investigators testified in a Sept. 2006 hearing that Bleyle had apparently used file-sharing software to download child pornography to his computer. Authorities seized computers from his home and said they found thousands of illegal images featuring children in suggestive poses.

According to the testimony, Bleyle admitted that he molested patients at the hospital, many of whom were severely brain-damaged or disabled.

Bleyle was a Children's Hospital employee for 26 years, 10 of which he worked at the convalescent center.

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