

Conn. doctor charged with sexually assaulting patients at Clinton practice

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A doctor charged with sexually assaulting patients at a health center was released on \$450,000 bail Tuesday.

Dr. Tory Westbrook, the husband of a Superior Court judge, was charged with multiple counts of sexual assault for attacks police say occurred at Clinton's Community Health Center between 2010 and January.

The Hartford Courant reported Westbrook's attorney said he'll plead not guilty to the charges.

"Dr. Westbrook is an outstanding physician who has for many, many years given a great deal to the community," attorney Norman Pattis said. "I would ask for people to suspend judgment, not to believe everything they read, don't jump on the bandwagon and give us an opportunity to tell our side of the story. I'm confident that, when that happens, Dr. Westbrook will return to the practice of medicine."

Prosecutor Peter McShane indicated he would seek to have the temporary sealing of warrants in the case made permanent.

The arrest of Westbrook came after a five-month investigation that included the state's attorney's office and state Departments of Health and Consumer Protection, Clinton

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police said in a news release.

The health center released a statement saying it received a serious complaint against Westbrook, 43, within days after he resigned in February to become medical director of the Charter Oak

Health Center in Hartford.

Health center officials said they reported the allegation to police and the Health Department and have been cooperating in the investigation.

"Community Health Center takes all patient concerns seriously and has stringent procedures in place to protect the quality and safety of care," the center said in its statement. "We will continue to work with authorities as needed."

Police said they interviewed "a number of victim patients" who reported they were sexually abused during appointments at the Clinton office.

Charter Oak CEO Peter Velez told the Courant that Westbrook, of Glastonbury, has been placed on administrative leave and he has never treated patients there.

Westbrook is the husband of Superior Court Judge Dawne Westbrook, and he was appointed last year to a volunteer position on the governor's health care cabinet. The governor's office said Tuesday the appointment was under review because of the allegations. Westbrook also has served on the state's commission on health equity.

A phone message seeking comment was left at Westbrook's home. ■