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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

Doctor facing new allegations

By MITCH SMITH

Tribune reporter

A doctor in southern Illinois who was cleared of criminal sexual abuse charges is facing renewed allegations of misconduct with patients from state regulators who on Monday issued an emergency suspension of his medical license.

Dr. Jogendra S. Chhabra last week filed a lawsuit asking the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation to remove a suspension on his medical license and allow him to return to work. Criminal charges against him of aggravated criminal sexual assault, aggravated criminal sexual abuse and battery were dismissed in August.

State regulators terminated the old suspension Monday but issued a new suspension that took effect immediately and detailed charges that he hugged, kissed and inappropriately touched female patients. If he was allowed to resume his practice, the department alleged, Chhabra would

pose "an immediate danger to the public."

Chhabra faces an administrative hearing later this week. Jay Stewart, director of the department's Division of Professional Regulation, will decide any disciplinary action.

Chhabra's attorney, Thomas Zimmerman Jr., said the state's allegations were false and that he believes the new suspension is retribution for Chhabra's lawsuit.

"The department should reinstate Dr. Chhabra's medical license and let him get on with the practice of medicine," Zimmerman said.

After criminal charges were filed against Chhabra, state regulators placed a restriction on his license that allowed him to see patients only in the company of a chaperon. When he allegedly saw patients unaccompanied, his license was suspended.

Chhabra practiced in White County, southeast of St. Louis.

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