

Avondale doctor is convicted of gross sexual imposition

Judge finds him not guilty of more serious felony charges

By Dan Horn

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Avondale doctor James Kegler was convicted of gross sexual imposition Tuesday, but a judge found him not guilty of more serious felony charges.

Kegler was accused of molesting at least seven female patients and could have faced up to 60 years in prison if he had been convicted of all charges.

He now faces up to three years but also could be sentenced to probation.

Hamilton County Common Pleas Judge Dennis Helmick threw out several of the charges, concluding that prosecutors either had not proven the accusations, or that the alleged offense occurred too long ago.

Kegler waived a jury trial so the judge decided the case.

Defense attorney Clyde Bennett said the judge's verdict Tuesday validates his client's claim that the accusations are the result of misunderstandings – not sexual molestation.

"His contact was for medical reasons," Bennett said.

Kegler testified Tuesday that everything he did was part of a standard medical exam.

Assistant Prosecutor Anne Flanagan said the case was challenging because some allegations dated back several years, and because medical records were unavailable to prove when Kegler examined some of the patients.

But she said she has no doubt Kegler sexually abused patients. The indictment against him included accusations by seven patients, but prosecutors received complaints from

a total of 19 women.

"We have repeated stories from people," Flanagan said.

She said the victims did not know each other and did not have contact before coming forward with the allegations.

Helmick, however, found that prosecutors had proven just two of the 10 original charges. Gross sexual imposition, which implies improper sexual touching, carries a potential sentence of up to three years in prison.

But it also comes with a "presumption of probation," which Bennett said means his client should go free after sentencing on June 19.

The Ohio Medical Board and the Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure have suspended Kegler's medical licenses.