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City doctor faces federal drug charges

By **Andrew Clevenger**
Staff writer

A Charleston eye doctor who voluntarily surrendered his medical license in August amid allegations of drug abuse is facing drug charges in federal court.

Last week, prosecutors filed a one-count information against R. David Allara, alleging he illegally possessed hydrocodone between August 2005 and April 2006.

An information, which cannot be filed without a defendant's permission, generally indicates that a defendant is cooperating with prosecutors.

Allara, a one-time captain of the West Virginia University basketball team under coach Gale Catlett, reached an agreement with the state Board of Medicine in August.

The agreement allowed Allara to apply for reinstatement after completing an in-patient drug treatment program and proving to the board that he can practice medicine without posing a risk to himself or his patients.

Board records indicate that Allara was first licensed in 1987, and he ran his own practice, Cataract and Refractive Surgery Institute Inc., in Kanawha City.

St. Albans lawyer Duane Rosenlieb, Allara's criminal attorney, did not return a call Monday.

In December, a former patient sued Allara in Kanawha Circuit Court, alleging that he performed LASIK eye surgery on her without recognizing that she had a relatively rare condition that made the surgery too risky.

In addition, the suit alleges that Allara treated the patient while high.

"Upon information and belief, Dr. Allara examined and/or treated Sherry Dew while he was impaired and under the influence of cocaine and/or other illicit drugs," the suit reads.

According to the Board of Medicine's Web site, Allara has faced five malpractice allegations. The first was dismissed in 1994, and the following four settled for \$40,000, \$30,000, \$75,000 and \$900,000.

The last settlement, for surgery performed in 2003, settled in December 2007, according to the site.

Staff writer Tom Searls contributed to this report.

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