

Greenwich Hospital doctor pleads guilty to sex sting charge

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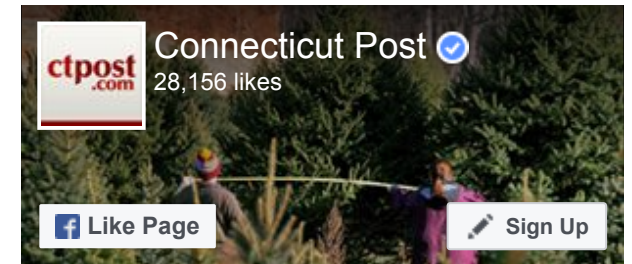
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Clifford Berken, 56, of Stamford. Photo courtesy of the Westchester District Attorney's office

A **Greenwich Hospital** internist charged in a December 2008 Internet sex sting pleaded guilty Tuesday in Westchester County Court in White Plains, N.Y., to the charge of

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attempting to disseminate indecent material to a minor.

Clifford Berken, 57, of Stamford, entered the plea more than a year after officers from the Westchester County District Attorney's Office busted the gastroenterologist for engaging in sexually explicit chats and arranging to meet an officer who was posing as a 15-year-old boy.

The plea deal comes with an agreed-upon sentence of five years probation. Berken will likely not face any jail time, officials said. While a judge could sentence him to a short jail term, Berken served several days in jail following his arrest, which can be counted toward any potential sentence, according to officials on the case.

Berken will also be required to register as a sex offender at his sentencing.

Berken had appeared in court several times since his arrest while his defense team, consisting of attorneys **Robert Mancuso** and **Eugene Riccio**, worked on mitigating the case.

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"It's a tragic situation involving a wonderful and beloved medical doctor," said Riccio following the hearing. Riccio did not comment on whether Berken would be forced to give up practicing medicine permanently following his sentencing.

Previously, Berken voluntarily surrendered his medical privileges with Greenwich Hospital

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and left his private practice in Greenwich following his arrest in 2008.

Police in New York said Berken engaged in online conversations from Dec. 2-4, 2008, during which various sex acts were discussed on a number of occasions, according to the Westchester District Attorney's Office. Berken also offered to meet the "teenage boy," at a location in downtown White Plains, according to officials.

Police arrested Berken when he arrived at the location, officials said.

Berken is scheduled to be sentenced April 20.

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