

Investigator Exclusive: Youth worker charged with raping teen

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BROOKLYN -- An HIV-positive man who worked with troubled teens at a Cleveland residential treatment center is charged with raping a 17-year-old boy who was once a patient at the center, Cuyahoga County Prosecutor spokesman Ryan Miday said.

Brooklyn Police arrested Ronnie Sagere, 34, after the boy went last Wednesday morning to MetroHealth Medical Center and reported that he was sexually assaulted at Sagere's home on Westbrook Drive, Miday said.

The boy was sleeping at the home after getting drunk on booze bought by Sagere when he woke up to find Sagere on top of him, raping him, according to Miday.

Sagere remained in jail Tuesday after a judge set bail at \$100,000. He faces charges of rape, gross sexual imposition, kidnapping and felonious assault, according to court records.

The felonious assault charge was filed because Sagere is HIV positive.

Sagere worked at the Cleveland Christian Home, a residential center on Lorain Avenue, where wards of the state are treated for behavioral and mental health issues, said Cleveland Christian Home Chief Executive Officer David Lundeen.

It was Sagere's job to work directly with patients, most of whom were 14 to 15 years old. Sagere was terminated after his arrest at the center last Thursday, said Lundeen.

Sagere met the boy at the residential center, where he was a patient at one time, said Mary Louise Madigan, a spokeswoman for the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services. Madigan said the boy was in the custody of DCFS until 2007 when he was returned to his family.

The two lost touch, but they reconnected in September through Facebook, Miday said.

Since then, Sagere routinely gave the boy rides, bought him clothes, paid for meals and gave him money.

On the night of the attack, Miday said Sagere took the boy out and bought him a Four Loko alcoholic drink. The boy became ill after having a second drink and he returned to Sagere's home to sleep.

Lundeen said there is no indication that Sagere engaged in improper behavior at the Cleveland Christian Home and that Sagere was also working with at least two other employees while on duty.

DCFS is also investigating the allegations, said Madigan.

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"Once we were alerted to this, we opened a case because a child's safety was compromised," she said. "My heart goes out to this boy."

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