

CONNECTICUT POST

\$25M sex assault suit filed against hospital

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Gonzalo Flores is accused of engaging in sexually inappropriate behavior with patients while the suspect was working as a certified nursing assistant at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport, Conn. Photo: Contributed Photo

A Fairfield man who reported to police in June that he had been sexually assaulted by a nursing assistant at [St. Vincent's Medical Center](#) has filed a \$25 million lawsuit against the hospital.

He later learned he was not the first alleged victim of the accused, [Gonzalo Flores](#).

"This is a [Catholic hospital](#)," said the man, referred to as [John Doe](#) in the lawsuit. "I was very sick, and I chose St. Vincent's because I trusted they would take care of me. Instead, the hospital

exposed me to a sexual deviant who was dressed in a hospital uniform and was working as a nurse's aide. Where can you go to be safe, if not a hospital?"

The lawsuit, claiming the hospital was negligent and reckless in putting vulnerable patients at risk, was filed Thursday in state [Superior Court](#) on behalf of the alleged victim and his wife.

"This is not only egregiously reckless and irresponsible behavior on the part of the hospital, it is clear medical malpractice," said [Antonio Ponvert III](#) of the law firm Koskoff, Koskoff and Bieder, who is representing the couple.

[Dianne Auger](#), senior vice president of St. Vincent's Medical Center, said they were not negligent.

"Patient safety is our highest priority," she said. "As soon as we knew (Flores) did this, we fired him. We are cooperating with police in this investigation and in the investigations of the incidents involving other men."

In January 2012, a California woman who claimed she was sexually abused in her local hospital by a male nursing assistant was awarded \$65 million by a jury.

Flores, a certified nursing assistant who worked at the hospital from 2011 until he was fired in July after the Fairfield man contacted police, has confessed that during his three years at St. Vincent's he fondled and sodomized patients at the hospital, police said.

He was arrested and has been charged so far with sexually assaulting three men in 2013 and 2014.

The Fairfield man had been in the hospital on June 10, 2014, suffering from an infection of the spine that left him nearly paralyzed, according to police.

The patient told police he had awakened that morning to find Flores' hands down his shorts, fondling him. When Flores realized the man was awake, he straightened up, said "Good morning" and immediately left the patient's room, police said.

The patient told his wife what had happened and the wife notified hospital security.

Police said Flores left the hospital after the incident, complaining he had a migraine.

Flores later confessed to the incident, police said. They said he also admitted having other sexual contact with patients.

In February 2014, 39-year-old [Martin Chalecki](#), of Bridgeport, complained to hospital security he had been sexually assaulted in his room by a male hospital employee. Hospital officials confirmed they received the complaint from Chalecki, but determined it was unsubstantiated after Flores denied the assault.

They notified police, but Flores remained employed at the hospital.

Flores has since been charged with sexually assaulting Chalecki.

And in September, a local man told police he was sodomized in his hospital room by Flores in March 2013. Police said he reported the incident after seeing the story about the Fairfield man's alleged assault in Hearst Connecticut Media newspapers. Flores is charged in that case as well.

Last month, [Juan Villanueva](#), of New Haven, filed suit against the hospital, claiming he was sexually abused by Flores in May 2013. He claims he immediately notified hospital security, but nothing was done.

Police have confirmed they are investigating the case. Villanueva would be the fourth alleged victim of Flores.

This is the first suit to assert claims on behalf of the victim's spouse.

"My husband is not the same since St. Vincent's," his spouse said. "This has been devastating to our marriage, and we have been terrified about what might have happened while my husband was completely helpless and unconscious for more than 30 days."