

Doctor rejects list of conditions, ends ties to Tri-City Hospital

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By Roxana Popescu
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OCEANSIDE – A veteran doctor at Tri-City Medical Center has refused to sign a list of conditions set forth by the hospital, his lawyer said Friday, effectively terminating his practice with the hospital.

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In a letter Friday to the president and CEO of Tri-City Medical Center, Dr. Behrooz Tohidi rejected the hospital's seven requirements. Renewal of his hospital privileges was contingent on his consent, and the deadline was 5 p.m. Friday.

"Dr. Tohidi and his wife, Mary, are not accepting the conditions for reappointment imposed upon them by the hospital because they are completely unreasonable," said his attorney, Barbara Hensleigh.

Hensleigh declined to release the conditions. An attorney for the hospital also would not release the conditions.

The dispute between Tohidi and hospital administration has gone on for more than a year in board meetings and two court cases.

Tohidi, an orthopedic surgeon at Tri-City since 1983, was suspended in June 2003 by the hospital's medical executive committee for allegedly creating a hostile work environment.

A review committee reinstated him in March when it found the suspension unwarranted.

Carlo Coppo, an attorney for Tri-City Healthcare District, declined to comment on the allegations, saying the hospital's peer review is confidential.

When Tohidi's hospital privileges expired in March, the board of directors drafted a list of seven conditions he had to meet for them to be renewed. Doctors' privileges at Tri-City are up for renewal every two years. Tohidi tried unsuccessfully to amend the demands in June.

He also has sued the hospital, saying the suspension was unfair.

Coppo said Tohidi's argument has no merit.

"We contend that the process has been fair, and we intend to vigorously defend," he said.

Tohidi can have a hearing at the hospital if he wants to keep working there, but Hensleigh said her client has other options.

"Dr. Tohidi is in good standing at other hospitals," Hensleigh said. "The good news is that he just had his privileges renewed at Scripps La Jolla Hospital, so he will be able to continue admitting patients there."