

Policy: Sex abuse by doctors 'profound betrayal'

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(AP) -- The nation's largest pediatricians' group has issued its first policy on protecting children from sexual abuse by doctors, citing a recent Delaware case and urging medical facilities to screen employees for previous abuse.

Parents and patients also should be informed that they have a right to have a [chaperone](#) present during children's exams, according to the policy from the American Academy of Pediatrics. Training programs should educate future doctors about appropriate boundaries, and health care institutions should report suspected abuse to authorities and not quietly pass the problem doctor along to another institution.

"Any sexual abuse of children by medical providers is a profound betrayal of their responsibility for patient well-being, trust, and [medical ethics](#)," the policy states.

In June, former Delaware [pediatrician](#) Earl Bradley was convicted on 14 counts of first-degree rape and five counts each of second-degree assault and [sexual exploitation](#) of a child. Prosecutors said Bradley recorded homemade videos of sex crimes against more than 80 victims, most of them female toddlers.

That case has "reminded us that some among the pediatric profession may use their position of authority and trust to take advantage of their patients," the policy states.

The policy is available online and is to appear in the August issue of the journal *Pediatrics*.

More information: Policy: <http://bit.ly/nU5Okq>

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