

# Doctor alleges racial discrimination in pay-issue suit against Roswell Park - The Buffalo News

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A doctor is alleging racial discrimination in a lawsuit against Roswell Park Cancer Institute and his department supervisor.

Attorneys for Dr. Willie Underwood, a urologist, have asked the U.S. District Court to allow the plaintiff to file an amended complaint in the case that dates back to 2014.

Underwood, who was hired in 2008, alleges he was paid less than a less-experienced white counterpart, given unequal opportunities for advancement, offered less access to operative time without cause, and worked in an environment permeated with discrimination against him because he is black.

Among an assortment of issues, the proposed amended complaint claims Underwood's supervisor, Dr. James Mohler, urology department chairman, criticized Underwood's communication skills, alleging that Mohler was engaging in a stereotype of black people by suggesting that Underwood was a poor communicator.

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Underwood, who managed a prostate cancer database, also claims that he expressed concerns about inaccuracies in the database to Mohler and Roswell Park executives, but that Mohler and the administration failed to respond to his concerns.

"We're asking the court to allow us to amend the original complaint," said Michael Willemin, an attorney with Wigdor LLP, a New York City law firm that took over the lawsuit for Underwood after the court in January granted motions to dismiss certain aspects of the case against Roswell Park and Mohler.

Roswell Park and Mohler deny the accusations of racial discrimination.

"Dr. Underwood has chosen to characterize this matter as involving racial discrimination, a charge that is unfounded and firmly denied by Roswell Park," spokeswoman Annie-Deck Miller said in a statement.

The parties also have a mediation session scheduled for May 12.