



**STATE OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF THE WELFARE INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD INSPECTOR GENERAL**

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**LETIZIA TAGLIAFIERRO  
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

May 5, 2020

Paul Brady  
Commissioner  
Schenectady County Department of Social Services  
797 Broadway  
Schenectady, New York 12305-2704

Re: NYS IG 4448-322-2017

Dear Commissioner Brady:

On December 6, 2017, the Office of the Welfare Inspector General received a complaint alleging that [REDACTED], a former employee of the Schenectady County Department of Social Services (SCDSS), may be engaging in fraudulent activities. Specifically, the complainant alleged that [REDACTED] and her boyfriend, [REDACTED] an operator of multiple residences in Schenectady and the owner of the [REDACTED], used two different electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards to purchase food at Price Chopper on [REDACTED] in Schenectady. The Office of the Welfare Inspector General investigated this allegation and found that [REDACTED] repeatedly utilizes EBT cards belonging to different residents of homes that [REDACTED] operates.

By way of background, at the time the Office of the Welfare Inspector General received this complaint, [REDACTED] was a SCDSS employee being disciplined for inappropriate database searches. A review of [REDACTED] database searches by SCDSS and the Office of the Welfare Inspector General found that although [REDACTED]

inappropriately accessed the SCDSS database, there was no evidence that she altered records and/or improperly provided benefits to others. As a result of the employee discipline matter handled by the Schenectady County Attorney's Office, [REDACTED] is no longer employed with SCDSS.

The Office of the Welfare Inspector General's investigation of [REDACTED] found that he operates [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] both located at [REDACTED] in Schenectady. [REDACTED] also operates an [REDACTED], [REDACTED] located at [REDACTED] in Schenectady, which receives funding from SCDSS. The investigation, which included a review of EBT card and Price Chopper transaction records for former and current residents of homes that [REDACTED] operates, found that [REDACTED] frequently utilized these residents' EBT cards to purchase items at Price Chopper. For example, between July 2017 and January 2018, [REDACTED] used EBT benefits belonging to 18 different recipients in 31 Price Chopper transactions totaling \$3,264.45 in food purchases.

In September 2019, the Office of the Welfare Inspector General, with the assistance of the SCDSS Investigations Unit, requested interviews with 13 current recipients whose cards were used by [REDACTED]. Of these, only five recipients voluntarily answered questions related to the matter. One recipient stated she voluntarily gave her EBT card to [REDACTED] to purchase food. Another denied ever giving her EBT card to [REDACTED]. A third indicated he sold his EBT card to others in the past. A fourth did not recall ever giving his EBT card to [REDACTED] but admitted selling his benefits to a local store. A fifth recipient admitted selling his EBT card to [REDACTED] to obtain money to pay his telephone bill.

The investigation raises suspicion that [REDACTED] may be inappropriately accessing and utilizing EBT cards. We are providing this information to your office for whatever further action you deem appropriate. In the event you develop additional evidence of impropriety, please do not hesitate to contact Deputy Inspector General James R. Davis at 518.474.1010.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Letizia Tagliafierro  
Inspector General