



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Workers' Compensation Fraud Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 7, 2016
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FINGER LAKES WOMAN CHARGED WITH NEARLY \$6,000 WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the arrest of a Finger Lakes woman on charges she defrauded the workers' compensation system and stole nearly \$6,000 in insurance benefits to which she was not entitled.

JoAnne Cardona, 47, of Laughlin Lane, Geneseo, was charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Insurance Fraud in the Third Degree, Perjury in the First Degree, two counts of the Workers' Compensation crime of Fraudulent Practices, and five counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, all felonies.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that Cardona had been receiving workers' compensation benefits since 2003 when she allegedly suffered neck, shoulder and upper back injuries when an elderly resident fell on her during her employment at an Amsterdam, New York home for the elderly. Subsequently, she stopped working and began collecting workers' compensation benefits.

In October, 2013, she began working at the Center for Disability Rights, Inc. in Rochester, New York. In the subsequent months, as found by the investigation, she repeatedly submitted documentation to the State Insurance Fund asserting she was not working in any capacity. She also falsely testified at a State Workers' Compensation Board hearing in September of 2014 that she had not worked in any capacity before June 2014. Between October 2013 and June 2014, she received \$5,888 in workers' compensation benefits, about \$185 per week, to which she was not entitled.

“This defendant falsified paperwork and misrepresented her work status in order to receive compensation benefits to which she was not entitled,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “I will continue dedicating the resources of my position and office to protect the benefits meant to assist honest, hard-working New Yorkers.”

Under State law, employers are required to maintain Workers' Compensation coverage for their employees, and employees are expected to provide truthful information regarding their work activity to insurance carriers and the Workers' Compensation Board during the time they are receiving benefits.

Cardona was arraigned in Albany City Court and was released pending reappearance Monday, Sept. 12, in City Court.

The defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked New York State Insurance Fund Executive Director Eric Madoff and his office for their assistance with the investigation, and Albany County District Attorney P. David Soares and his office for prosecuting this matter.

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The New York State Office of the Workers' Compensation Fraud Inspector General investigates fraud, abuse and/or illegal acts against the New York State Workers' Compensation system, including fraud by medical service providers, employers seeking to evade appropriate Workers' Compensation charges, and employees who fabricate injuries to fraudulently receive system benefits. Complaints and referrals are kept confidential. We can be reached by calling toll free: 1-800-367-4448, utilizing our online complaint form at <http://www.ig.ny.gov> or sending an email to: inspector.general@ig.ny.gov. You also can write to our office at: Office of the Workers' Compensation Fraud Inspector General, Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 2, 16th Floor, Albany, New York 12223