



NEWS RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Nov. 22, 2017
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STATE PRISON GUARD FAKED MEDICAL REPORTS AND STOLE MORE THAN \$30,000 IN WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS WHILE NOT WORKING

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the arrest of a New York State Corrections Officer on charges he defrauded the Worker's Compensation system by more than \$30,000 by submitting dozens of forged and falsified medical records so he could avoid working but still get full pay.

Kristopher Cowan, 29, of Route 203, Valatie, who is employed by the State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision as a Corrections Officer at Coxsackie Correctional Facility, was arrested and charged today with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and thirty-four (34) counts each of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree and Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, all felonies.

“This Correction Officer is charged with brazenly enriching himself and avoiding his work duties by attempting to deceive the Workers' Compensation system with false documents regarding his health,” said Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott. “These actions undermined the integrity of a system designed to help those truly unable to work, and I will continue to use my authority to combat such fraud.”

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that Cowan, while employed at the Coxsackie prison, filed a claim for a work-related injury in May 2015. Following the incident, he remained out of work for less than a week. From August 2015 through this November, however, Cowan began repeatedly submitting medical documentation for time off under Workers' Compensation during which he would receive full pay while not working. On one occasion, he remained out on leave for 13 straight months. The investigation found that 34 of the documents Cowan submitted purportedly by medical practitioners certifying that he was too incapacitated to work were in fact fake. Moreover, the majority of medical examinations the documentation represented actually never took place. In total, Cowan submitted 34 documents for Workers' Compensation benefits that were faked and forged, and he received more than \$30,000 in Workers' Compensation benefits to which he was not entitled.

Cowan was arraigned before Athens Town Justice James H. Robinson, Jr and released pending further court action.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the New York State Police for their assistance with the investigation and arrest, and Greene County District Attorney Joseph Stanzone and his office for their assistance with the investigation and prosecution of this matter.

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

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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