



# NEWS RELEASE

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

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## **STATE CORRECTIONS OFFICER CHARGED WITH DEFRAUDING WORKERS' COMPENSATION BY WORKING AT A CAPITAL REGION BAR WHILE CLAIMING HE WAS NOT EMPLOYED AT ALL**

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the arrest of a New York State prisons corrections officer on charges he defrauded the Workers' Compensation system and stole benefits to which he was not entitled by claiming he was not working at all due to an injury when he was actually working as a bouncer at a City of Troy bar and getting paid off the books.

Benjamin Essenter, 44, of Clifton Park, was arrested and arraigned in the Town of Colonie Justice Court on the charges of Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, Insurance Fraud in the Fourth Degree, and the Workers' Compensation crime of Fraudulent Practices, all felonies.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that Essenter, a Correctional Officer at Coxsackie Correctional Facility, reported a work-related injury in the summer of 2016 and stopped working at the prison while receiving Workers' Compensation benefits. While out on leave and receiving benefits, Essenter submitted a medical examination report in which he indicated he has not been working in any capacity when in fact the investigation determined that in late 2016, while out on Workers' Compensation leave, Essenter was working in a City of Troy bar where he was paid off the books.

“This defendant is charged with a deliberate abuse of a benefits program meant to assist honest and hard-working New Yorkers who become disabled through a work-related injury,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “I will continue dedicating the resources of my office to protect the integrity of the state's vital Workers' Compensation system and pursue anyone who takes advantage of it.”

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.

Essenter was arraigned on the charges in the Town of Colonie Justice Court and was released on his own recognizance pending further court action.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the New York State Department of Financial Services and the State Insurance Fund for their assistance with the investigation, the Town of Colonie Police for their assistance with the arrest, and Albany County District Attorney P. David Soares and his office for prosecuting this matter.

The charges are merely allegations and 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](mailto: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*