



# NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General  
**Catherine Leahy Scott**

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## **STATE PSYCHIATRIC CENTER TREATMENT AIDE AND NURSE EACH ADMIT TO SUBMITTING FALSIFIED RECORDS TO QUALIFY FOR EXTENDED MEDICAL LEAVE**

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the guilty pleas of a secure psychiatric center medical aide and a nurse who each possessed and submitted forged doctor’s certificates meant to enable them to receive extended medical leave from their positions with the New York State Office of Mental Health (“OMH”) without fear of losing their employment.

As a condition of the plea, they both had to resign from their employment.

Jeovonnie Jackson, 44, of Deborah Drive, Utica, pleaded guilty in Oneida County Court to Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the Second Degree. As a condition of his plea, Jackson agreed to submit his resignation from State service and was sentenced to 50 hours of community service.

Russell Angell, 44, of Yorkville, pleaded guilty in Oneida County Court to two counts of disorderly conduct. As a condition of his plea, Angell agreed to submit his resignation from State service and was sentenced to 100 hours of community service and a \$500 fine.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that in October 2016, Jackson, a former Secure Care Treatment Aide-1, submitted a forged medical form - known as a Certification of Health Care Provider for Employee’s Serious Health Condition - to the human resources office at the Central New York Psychiatric Center where he worked. The doctor’s signature on the certificate, which helps establish an employee’s eligibility for Family and Medical Leave Act protections under State law, was forged.

A separate investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that Angell, a Psychiatric Nurse II for the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH), twice used a forged doctor’s certificate to defraud OMH and enable his extended absence from his State employment under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

The certifications allow employees to take repeated spontaneous and extended sick leave without having to provide any further explanations. Angell used a forged certificate in July 2015 and again in November 2015 for (FMLA) leave from his employment at Central New York Psychiatric Center.

“These defendants both manipulated critical protections for workers who are truly in need of extended leave to care for themselves or a loved one,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “They violated the public trust and lost their employment with the State because of it. I will continue using the resources of my office to help ensure the integrity of critical employment benefits and protections that are in our laws.”

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the New York State Police for their assistance with the arrests, and Oneida County District Attorney Scott D. McNamara and his office for prosecuting these cases.

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