



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Acting Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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NYS INSPECTOR GENERAL ANNOUNCES ARREST OF DOUBLE DIPPING STATE EMPLOYEE

*State Worker Paid for Caring for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities
While Being Paid as Sports Coach for Rochester Region
College and High School on State Time*

Acting New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott announced today the arrest of a New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) employee on felony charges, for allegedly stealing from the state and for filing false paperwork certifying that she was working, when in fact she was not. The Inspector General's investigation found that while the state employee was paid for working as a therapist with individuals with disabilities, she was actually working as a paid softball and basketball coach.

Renee A. Smith, 28, of Livonia, was arrested this morning and charged with ten counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree and one count of Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, all felonies.

"This Defendant's theft from the state and abuse of her position is even more outrageous, considering the individuals in need that she was entrusted to serve," said Acting Inspector General Scott. "This arrest demonstrates that we will hold state employees accountable for acts contrary to their public service and responsibilities. I will continue to work with state agencies and prosecutors to combat such fraud and abuse."

Smith has worked with individuals with disabilities for OPWDD as a full time Recreational Therapist through the Finger Lakes Developmental Disabilities Office. The Inspector General's investigation revealed that while employed by OPWDD, Smith was also employed as a head coach at Genesee Community College (GCC) and as a coach for sports teams at Livonia Central School District.

The Inspector General uncovered multiple instances where Smith allegedly filed certifications she was working in her capacity as a recreational therapist for OPWDD, indicating that she was caring for individuals with disabilities, when she was allegedly coaching girls softball and basketball teams at GCC and Livonia. In one instance Smith admitted she was working for OPWDD when she was traveling to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina with the GCC softball team. As a result of Smith's purported misconduct, she was paid by the state for work which she allegedly did not perform.

Monroe County District Attorney Sandra Doorley said, "Those who work for public institutions are entrusted to conduct themselves in an ethical manner, serving the needs of the organization while

enhancing the quality of life for all members of our community. The individual in this case allegedly violated that trust, and I thank Acting Inspector General Scott for bringing this case of public corruption to our attention."

OPWDD Commissioner Courtney Burke said, "OPWDD takes incidents of theft very seriously, and will continue to ensure that our time and attendance policies are adhered to as part of our ongoing efforts to strengthen accountability and improve our service delivery system."

Smith is scheduled for arraignment on the charges in Rochester City Court on April 30, 2013.

Smith has been employed as a Recreational Therapist for OPWDD since 2009. Her current salary is \$45,952.00.

Acting Inspector General Scott thanked the New York State Police for their assistance in with this arrest, and the Monroe County District Attorney's Office for the prosecution of this matter.

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

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