



NEWS

From New York State Inspector General
Ellen N. Biben

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 22, 2011

Former Social Worker Admits to Working Out – Instead of Working – on State Time

Jeffrey Bieder pays nearly \$9,000 in restitution as prosecution seeks jail time

State Inspector General Ellen Biben and Tompkins County District Attorney Gwen Wilkinson announce the felony guilty plea of a former State social worker who spent much of his work week at a local fitness club instead of caring for disabled individuals he was supposed to oversee.

Jeffrey Bieder, a former Licensed Master Social Worker 1 with the State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), pleaded guilty on December 21, 2011 to Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree before Tompkins County Court Judge John C. Rowley.

As part of the plea agreement, Bieder paid nearly \$9,000 in restitution to the State and prosecutors will recommend at sentencing that he serve 30 days in jail.

Inspector General Biben said, "This former employee not only stole from New Yorkers, he disregarded his critical responsibility to care for and protect some of the State's most vulnerable citizens. My office will continue to aggressively pursue employees who perform with a blatant lack of integrity, and I thank District Attorney Wilkinson for her partnership in this case."

District Attorney Wilkinson said, "Mr. Bieder defrauded taxpayers out of thousands of dollars, while shirking his duties to disabled clients. We seek payment of restitution for New York taxpayers. We recommend jail time for this defendant for the despicable character of his crimes. Our ability to prosecute this matter aggressively is attributable to the strong case put together by Inspector General Biben's office."

Bieder, 58, of Ithaca, who was assigned to OPWDD's Tompkins Regional Center in Ithaca, oversaw developmentally disabled individuals receiving OPWDD benefits while they were residing in private homes and nursing homes. His responsibilities included routine visits to the homes.

He repeatedly failed to fulfill his responsibilities by regularly spending parts of the work day at a fitness center, the City Health Club in Ithaca, instead of doing his job. He also falsified records of an individual under his care, indicating she was “in good spirits, and has a positive attitude,” while in fact other records indicated her health was rapidly deteriorating and that she died the same day he reported visiting her. Fitness club records indicate he checked in at the gym 19 minutes after he said he left his Tompkins Regional Center office on his way to visiting the individual under his care.

Altogether, Bieder was at the fitness club 299 times during periods he reported to have been working in 2008 and 2009, stealing a total of \$8,626.77 in salary from the State. Bieder paid \$8,626.77 to the State at the time of his plea.

After spending 29 years working for the State, Bieder retired September 2010 after his supervisor spotted him at the gym during work hours. His final annual salary was \$65,192.

Judge Rowley scheduled sentencing for February 2, 2012.

Inspector General Biben and District Attorney Wilkinson thanked OPWDD and the New York State Police for their assistance in the case.

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