



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the New York State Welfare Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott – Acting Welfare Inspector General

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 8, 2018

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QUEENS COUPLE CHARGED WITH NEAR SIX-FIGURE WELFARE FRAUD

NEW YORK CITY - New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott and Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced the arrest of a Queens husband and wife accused of stealing nearly \$92,000 in welfare food stamp and health care benefits by concealing income the couple earned through employment.

Dhaneshwar Sukhdeo, 42, and Samantha Sukhdeo, 46, of Lefferts Boulevard, were each arrested and charged with Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, Welfare Fraud in the Second Degree, Conspiracy in the Fourth Degree and twelve counts each of Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, all felonies. The charges allege the couple falsified applications for public assistance benefits enabling them to receive \$16,132 in food stamp benefits and \$75,864 in Medicaid coverage to which they were not entitled.

“Through a brazen fraud, these defendants concealed their employment income so they could steal taxpayer-funded public benefits to which they were not entitled,” said **Inspector General Leahy Scott**. “I will continue to use all of the resources at my disposal to protect the integrity of the public benefits system for those who are truly in the most need of financial assistance.”

“Food stamps and medicaid benefits are intended to help the truly needy. The defendants in this case, however, are alleged to have taken advantage of the system by downplaying their income to collect assistance – making all taxpayers victims of their con,” said **District Attorney Brown**. “I want to thank Inspector General Leahy Scott and her office for their commitment to uncovering welfare fraud. My office will continue to work diligently with our law enforcement partners to stop those who would game the system for their own financial gain.”

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that between 2009 to 2016, the Sukhdeos fraudulently obtained \$91,996 in welfare benefits to which they were not entitled by repeatedly submitting documents falsifying and concealing their household income when applying for food stamps (also known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) and Medicaid coverage. Medicaid is a joint federal-state program that provides health coverage for low income and at-risk individuals. In repeated applications and recertifications for the benefits, the Sukhdeos listed no employment income for Dhaneshwar Sukhdeo, who was indeed receiving income as an electrical contractor.

Altogether, the Sukhdeos received \$75,864.74 in Medicaid and \$16,132 in food stamps to which they were not entitled.

The Sukhdeos were both arraigned on the charges in Queens Criminal Court Monday evening and released on their own recognizance pending their reappearance in court on June 12.

The defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the New York City Human Resources Administration for their assistance with the investigation, and Queens County District Attorney Brown and his office for their assistance with the investigation and for prosecuting this matter.

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The New York State Office of the Welfare Inspector General investigates fraud, abuse or illegal acts committed against public assistance programs designed to help those in need. Our office also investigates complaints about the agencies and local social services districts who administer social services programs. Complaints and referrals are kept confidential. We can be reached by calling toll free: 1-800-367-4448, utilizing our online complaint form: <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 Welfare Inspector General, Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 2, 16th Floor Albany, New York 12223