



NEWS

From New York State Inspector General
Ellen N. Biben

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Working Out -- Instead of Working -- on State Time, Former Social Worker is Charged with Grand Larceny and Falsifying Records of The Disabled in His Care

State Inspector General Ellen Biben and Tompkins County District Attorney Gwen Wilkinson today announced the arrest of a former State social worker on felony charges accusing him of stealing from the State and filing false paperwork regarding his review of care for the developmentally disabled.

Jeffrey Bieder, a former Licensed Master Social Worker 1 with the State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), was charged with grand larceny in the third degree, defrauding the government, offering a false instrument for filing in the first degree and falsifying business records in the first degree, all felonies.

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 was accused of repeatedly failing 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 allegedly 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 to the gym 19 minutes after he said he left his Tompkins Regional Center office enroute to visiting the individual under his care.

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

Inspector General Biben said, "A State employee's obligation to do their job with integrity is all the more critical when their job is to protect the vulnerable."

District Attorney Wilkinson said, "This office remains committed to seek justice for vulnerable victims. We are pleased to be partners with Inspector General Biben in this effort."

Bieder was arraigned by Town of Dryden Court Justice Joseph Valentinelli and released on his own recognizance pending an appearance July 20 in Ithaca City Court.

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

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

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

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