



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Letizia Tagliafierro

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 18, 2019
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TWO STATE EMPLOYEES CHARGED WITH CREATING FRAUDULENT MEDICAL DOCUMENTS TO SUBSTANTIATE TIME OFF

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliafierro today announced the arrest of two State employees on felony charges that they acted in concert to create fraudulent medical notes enabling one of them to obtain unearned paid days off.

Jonathan Allen, 31, of Albany, a secretary for the Office of Mental Health (OMH), was charged today with five counts each of Forgery in the Second Degree and Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, all felonies.

Lawanda Buchanon, 43, of Albany, a medical assistance specialist with the Department of Health (DOH), was also charged with one count of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, a felony.

“These defendants devised a forged medical form that enabled Allen to fraudulently obtain paid time off to which he was not entitled,” said **Inspector General Tagliafierro**. “The Offices of the Inspector General and our law enforcement partners will not stand idly by while errant state employees misuse the system in violation of the public trust.”

An investigation by Inspector General Tagliafierro found that Buchanon created a fraudulent medical form which Allen subsequently submitted to his employer on multiple occasions between August and November 2018. This documentation was used to justify paid days off to which he otherwise was not entitled. Both Allen and Buchanon intended to defraud the State, knowing that such fraudulent medical documentation contained a forged physician signature and dates of service on which Allen never received treatment.

Allen and Buchanon were both arraigned on the charges in Albany City Court and released on their own recognizance. Allen is scheduled to return to court on April 23, 2019 and Buchanon has no return date at this time.

Inspector General Tagliafierro thanked OMH and DOH for their assistance with the investigation, the Albany City Police Department for their assistance with the arrest, and Albany County District Attorney P. David Soares and his office for prosecuting this case.

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

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