



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Letizia Tagliafierro

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CNY PSYCH CENTER EMPLOYEE STOLE NEARLY \$6,000 IN WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD CASE

SYRACUSE – New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliafierro today announced the arrest of a New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) employee on multiple felony charges that he defrauded the Workers' Compensation system and stole benefits to which he was not entitled by claiming he was not working due to an injury when he was actually operating a business.

Karl Hellinger, 53, of Clinton, a Security Care Treatment Assistant II at Central New York Psychiatric Center (CNYPC), was charged today with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Insurance Fraud in the Third Degree, both felonies.

An investigation by the Offices of the Inspector General found that in June 2018, Hellinger left work at CNYPC due to a work-related shoulder injury and began collecting Workers' Compensation wage replacement benefits. While on leave, Hellinger worked at K&K Korean, a food truck operating in Oneida County, between July 4, 2018 and August 23, 2018, obtaining nearly \$6,000 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

“This defendant’s blatant concealment of work activity was an abuse of a benefits program meant to assist hard-working and honest New-Yorkers,” said **Inspector General Tagliafierro**. “The Offices of the Inspector General and our law enforcement partners will not permit such abuses of taxpayer-funded programs, especially by a public employee, and will continue to pursue anyone who attempts to do so.”

Hellinger was arraigned on the charges in the New Hartford Town Court and released on bail pending a reappearance in court on May 2, 2019.

Inspector General Tagliafierro thanked OMH for their assistance with this investigation, the New York State Police for their assistance with the arrest and Oneida County District Attorney Scott D. McNamara and his office for prosecuting the case.

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

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