



NEWS RELEASE
From New York State Inspector General
Letizia Tagliafierro

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Contact: Lee Park - 518.474.1010

**OFFICE OF MENTAL HEALTH EMPLOYEE ARRESTED FOR MAKING
\$23K IN UNAPPROVED PURCHASES WITH STATE CREDIT CARD –
INCLUDING THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS AT SMOKE SHOP**

HAUPPAUGE – New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliafierro today announced the arrest of New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) employee at Pilgrim Psychiatric Center in West Brentwood who allegedly used a New York State procurement credit card for more than \$23,000 in unapproved purchases, including thousands of dollars at a smoke shop specializing in high-end glass water pipes, as well as other items wholly unrelated to his state work.

Michael Weinstock, 38, of Saint James, was arrested today and charged with two counts of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and one count of Official Misconduct before Judge Gaetan B. Lozito in Suffolk County District Court. Weinstock was released on his own recognizance and his next court appearance is November 12.

“The audacity of this individual in thinking he could get away with spending thousands of taxpayer dollars to buy paraphernalia and other personal items is astounding,” said Inspector General Tagliafierro. “The Office of Mental Health’s internal checks and balances detected the purchases and the agency immediately notified our office. Our investigation uncovered the details of his blatant misuse of taxpayer dollars and he is now being held accountable for breaching the state’s trust.”

Weinstock, a general mechanic at Pilgrim Psychiatric Center since December 2010, had a State procurement credit card solely intended for use to purchase items for the facility’s maintenance department. However, OMH noted during an audit that Weinstock made numerous suspicious purchases with the card and referred the matter to the Inspector General.

The investigation determined that Weinstock used the card to make more than \$23,168 in purchases unrelated to his work, including several thousands of taxpayer dollars at a Chicago-based smoke shop carrying “tobacco accessories” including glass pipes, rolling papers, hookahs and high-end glass water pipes that sell for upward of \$1,000 apiece.

Weinstock was suspended from OMH after the illegal expenditures were uncovered.

Inspector General Tagliafierro thanked OMH and its director of internal affairs/chief of investigations for their partnership in the investigation and Suffolk County District Attorney Timothy D. Sini and his office for their assistance with the investigation and for prosecuting this matter.

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

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