



NEWS RELEASE
From New York State Inspector General
Letizia Tagliafierro

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**OFFICE OF MENTAL HEALTH EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY 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 guilty plea of a New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) employee at Pilgrim Psychiatric Center in West Brentwood who 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, pled guilty today to Official Misconduct before Hon. Richard T. Dunne, Acting County Court Judge in Suffolk County District Court. Weinstock paid \$23,168.80 in restitution and has resigned from state employment. He was ordered to perform 280 hours of community service and is due back in court December 17, 2020.

“This individual believed he could get away with spending thousands of taxpayer dollars to buy personal items,” said Inspector General Tagliafierro. “However, thanks to the Office of Mental Health’s diligence and my office’s investigation, we uncovered his blatant misuse of taxpayer dollars. 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 \$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.

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