



NEWS

From the Office of the New York State Inspector General
Joseph Fisch

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 28, 2009

Inspector General Finds Scammers Stole Cash Meant For Chronically Ill

New York State Inspector General Joseph Fisch announced two arrests Wednesday in the alleged theft of more than \$62,000 from a fund for cystic fibrosis patients.

Investigators from the Inspector General's office said Erin Sherman-Rohl, 34, and Sheldon Jacobson, 51, admitted to stealing \$62,383 from New York's Adult Cystic Fibrosis Assistance Program (ACFAP). ACFAP supports the medical care of cystic fibrosis patients fighting the chronic disease which affects the lungs and digestive system.

The thefts accounted for more than 10 percent of the program's annual budget.

"It's difficult to conceive of anything more reprehensible than taking funds intended for the treatment of seriously ill people," Inspector General Joseph Fisch said.

The Inspector General determined that from May 2007 through August 2008, the pair stole state funds while Sherman-Rohl worked for Health Research, Inc., a not-for-profit affiliated with the state Health Department on Broadway in Menands.

Sherman-Rohl, who processed claims, listed Jacobson as a medical care "recipient" so she could "reimburse" him with more

than a dozen payments totaling \$62,383. Jacobson is not a recipient. Jacobsen cashed the checks and the two split the money, officials said.

At the time, Sherman-Rohl, of West Sand Lake, and Jacobson, of Rotterdam – who met while working at a group home in Albany County - each owed tens of thousands of dollars in credit card and other debts, investigators said.

Sherman-Rohl left Health Research, Inc. for a new job in September as a disability analyst at the state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, making the same annual salary of \$53,038. The day after her departure, a Department of Health employee discovered there were no vouchers to back up Jacobson's "claims."

DOH contacted the Inspector General as soon as it discovered the theft.

"This employee was tasked with getting needed funds to provide for severely ill patients," said State Health Commissioner Richard F. Daines, M.D. "Instead she violated the public trust. We will not and cannot tolerate this kind of conduct in this Department. We appreciate the swift action of the Inspector General in investigating this case."

The Inspector General's Office and New York State Police arrested Sherman-Rohl and Jacobson at work Wednesday morning. Sherman-Rohl faces felony charges of grand larceny, computer tampering, forgery, offering a false instrument for filing and defrauding the government. Jacobson is charged with grand larceny.

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