



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE WELFARE INSPECTOR GENERAL

**Catherine Leahy Scott – Acting Welfare Inspector General**

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Contact Bill Reynolds: 518-414-1299

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## **ACTING WELFARE INSPECTOR GENERAL SCOTT ANNOUNCES ARREST OF BRONX WOMAN ON CHARGES SHE STOLE MORE THAN \$115,000 FROM NEW YORK'S PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

New York State Acting Welfare Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott and Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson announced the arrest of a Bronx woman who has been charged with defrauding the state of \$115,438 in Medicaid, Temporary Assistance (TA) cash benefits, and Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), after failing to report that her spouse resided in her household and that he was earning an income.

“This individual is charged with stealing from programs designed to help New Yorkers who need shelter, food and health care for themselves and their families,” said Inspector General Scott. “Applicants are required to disclose their income to ensure that they actually qualify for these important benefits. Anyone who provides false information or deliberately omits required facts about income is committing a criminal act. My office will continue to work with our prosecutorial partners to ensure those committing these crimes are brought to justice.”

Lizette Cuadrado, age 47, of the Bronx, has been charged with multiple felony and misdemeanor level crimes including one count of Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a class C felony; Welfare Fraud in the First Degree, a class C felony; and three counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony. If convicted, Cuadrado faces up to 15 years in prison.

Medicaid is available to income-qualifying New Yorkers who are unable to pay for medical care. TA provides temporary cash assistance for those who are unable to work, cannot find a job, or whose job income is insufficient to meet cost-of-living expenses. SNAP is a federally-funded program which provides benefits to help low-income New Yorkers – including working people, seniors, and people with disabilities – feed their families. SNAP eligibility and benefit levels are based on household size, income, expenses, and other factors.

Inspector General Scott’s investigation found that from January 2006 to April 2012, Cuadrado submitted false benefit applications to the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA). In these submissions, Cuadrado failed to disclose, as required, that she lived with her spouse, who was earning an income as part of her household.

Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson said: “It is shameful when someone not only defrauds the system, but also takes money out of the pockets of citizens of the Bronx who have genuine needs.”

During the Inspector General’s investigation, Cuadrado admitted to her lack of truthfulness on her welfare application. As a result of the false filings, Cuadrado improperly obtained a total of \$115,338 in public assistance benefits, as follows: \$57,563 from Medicaid, \$33,057 in TA cash benefits, and \$24,818 from SNAP.

Cuadrado was arraigned before the Hon. Steven Hornstein of the Bronx County City Criminal Court. Cuadrado is scheduled to return to court July 18, 2014. Cuadrado was arrested by the Bronx District Attorney Detective Investigators and New York State Office of Welfare Inspector General.

Inspector General Scott thanked HRA Commissioner Steven Banks and HRA’s Bureau of Fraud Investigation for their assistance with her investigation. Inspector General Scott also thanked Bronx District Attorney Johnson and his staff for prosecuting this matter.

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

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