

OIG No. 07-0110 (cross reference no. 06-1360)

Vanessa Amato

March 24, 2014

Office of the President Summary

The HHC Office of the Inspector General (OIG) received an anonymous complaint concerning Vanessa Amato, the Director of Social Services at Coney Island Hospital (CIH) and a subordinate to Ms. Amato. The anonymous complainant alleged that Ms. Amato “steered” CIH patients to nursing homes with which she had a “business relationship,” that Ms. Amato and the subordinate altered records to conceal misconduct, and that Ms. Amato gave preferable treatment to employees from whom she received gifts of value.

A second complaint, similar in nature, was received from an outside government agency. That complaint specifically alleged that Amato had received a plasma television from a nursing home, and also that her subordinate was related to her. It further alleged that another employee had been given a \$60 gift by a patient’s family.

OIG Report and Findings

The OIG conducted approximately eighteen interviews, reviewed relevant HHC documents including Department of Social Work records and email accounts. The OIG reported his findings and recommendations on March 24, 2014.

The OIG found sufficient evidence to support the allegation, admitted by Amato, that she had accepted a television from a nursing home to which CIH patients were referred. Though Ms. Amato asserts the television was won in a raffle, acceptance of the television may be construed as a violation of New York City Charter provisions including 2604 (b)(3), (5), and (13).

The OIG reports that no evidence or records were found to substantiate other allegations concerning “steering” of referrals, altered records, receiving gifts from employees, or accepting of money or gifts from families of patients. Nor was evidenced adduced to support the allegation that a subordinate was related to Amato.

The Inspector General recommends that Ms. Amato be disciplined for accepting the gift of the television and for failing to report receiving that gift.

Disposition by the Office of the President

The President's office accepts the findings of the OIG. On May 13, 2014, Ms. Amato was notified of sanctions of (i.) one month suspension and (ii.) two weeks deduction in annual leave.



Ram Raju, MD
President and CEO