

Charles J. Hynes



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KINGS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY CHARLES J. HYNES AND NYC HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION COMMISSIONER ROBERT DOAR ANNOUNCE INDICTMENTS OF EIGHT INDIVIDUALS FOR FRAUDULENTLY COLLECTING OVER \$500,000 IN GOVERNMENT BENEFITS

ONE DEFENDANT COLLECTED BENEFITS WHILE CONCEALING THE FACT THAT HE OWNED FIVE BUSINESSES

Brooklyn, January 31, 2012 – Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes and NYC Human Resources Administration Commissioner Robert Doar today announced the indictments of eight individuals for falsifying applications in order to fraudulently collect over \$500,000 in welfare and other benefits.

District Attorney Hynes said, “HRA funds are a crucial lifeline for thousands of struggling New Yorkers. When individuals like these defendants who have substantial income try to cheat the system, it hurts the neediest among us. Those who intentionally conceal information to obtain benefits for which they are not eligible will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. I would like to thank Commissioner Doar and HRA for their assistance in these investigations.”

Commissioner Doar said, “While the vast majority of New Yorkers receiving public assistance are honest about their situation, unfortunately, there are a few who try to prey on the system. Those who intentionally steal from government programs meant for those in need should be forewarned that this will not be tolerated and they will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. I would like to thank District Attorney Hynes for his strong commitment to pursuing the prosecution of those who commit welfare fraud.”

Mohammad Irshad Chaudhry, 58, is charged with fraudulently collecting \$146,887.41 in Medicaid benefits from HRA between January 1, 2004 and November 30, 2011 for himself, his wife and their five children.

The indictment alleges he committed this fraud by falsifying Medicaid applications. On the application Chaudhry claimed he was employed by Super Punjab Auto Repair shop in Long Island City and earned \$300-\$350 per week, and that he was a “helper” at a TriBeCa tea shop.

The indictment further alleges that Chaudhry is the owner of both the auto repair shop and the tea shop, from which he earned up to \$8000 per month, beginning in January 2004. He is also the alleged owner of a taxi cab and a taxi medallion, which brought in between \$4000-\$8000 a month. Deeds show his wife and his son purchased a rental property in 2008 at Brighton 8th Street where the family receives \$2,950 each month from building tenants.

Chaudhry allegedly failed to disclose that he derived income from other businesses, notably a Citgo gas station in Elmsford and Pak Sweets House in Coney Island Avenue.

Chaudhry made regular purchases from high-end retail stores like Brooks Brothers and donated \$10,000 to a non-profit organization, the Pakistani American Merchants Association.

The indictment charges Chaudhry with Welfare Fraud in the Second Degree, Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, and 12 counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. If convicted of the top count, Chaudhry faces a maximum of 15 years in prison.

In a separate indictment, Oksana Bourukhova, 33, is charged with illegally collecting \$39,310 in food stamps and \$59,993 from Medicaid, totaling \$99,303 between March 1, 2003 and December 31, 2010. According to the indictment, she applied for benefits under her maiden name and falsely claimed on that she is a single mother of her three children when in fact she has been living with the employed father of those three children who actually worked in a Medicaid office--Health Plus since 2003.

Bourukhova is charged with Welfare Fraud in the Second Degree, Grand Larceny in the Second Degree and eight counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. If convicted of the top charge, she faces up to 15 years in prison.

The third indictment charges husband and wife, Nuray Zivali, 40, and Yuksel Zivali, 36, with applying for and receiving Brooklyn-based Medicaid benefits, totaling over \$50,000. Neither Zivali has ever lived in Brooklyn. The couple lives in West Babylon, Long Island, and fraudulently listed the address of Brooklyn family members on their applications. Charges include Welfare Fraud in the Second Degree, Grand Larceny in the Second Degree and five counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. If convicted of the top count, the defendants each face up to 15 years in prison.

In the fourth indictment, Anna Fan, 36, received \$8077 in Medicaid benefits for herself and her three children from December 18, 2008 to December 31, 2009. According to the indictment, she failed to disclose on her Medicaid applications and recertification forms that she owned a commercial rental property in New Jersey. Records show that Fan regularly pays \$2700 a month, in cash mortgage payments on that property.

The fifth indictment charges Unise Key, 43, with concealing her employment as an MTA conductor in order to receive \$6,210 in food stamp assistance from April 1, 2009 to December 1, 2010. She claimed on HRA applications that the only income she received as a single mother was \$813.50 a month in disability payments however she was receiving salary and employed by the MTA.

The defendant also allegedly underreported her income to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in order to receive federal Section 8 housing assistance subsidies. From September 1, 2001 to September 1, 2010, Unise Key fraudulently collected \$48,087.30 in Section 8 housing assistance.

“Individuals wait a long period of time, sometimes years on a waiting list for subsidized housing, said Kevin Chan, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General. “We will continue to work with the Brooklyn DA’s Office to investigate those who cheat the Section 8 program.”

Charges against Key include Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree, Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, and Issuing a False Financial Statement. If convicted of the top count, Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree, the defendant faces a maximum of seven years in prison.

The final indictment alleges that Mehtab Qureshi, 43, and Sarfaraz Qureshi, 58, are the owners and landlords of six properties located in Brooklyn and upstate New York and that Sarfaraz Qureshi is the President and Chairman of Discount Contracting Corp..

In 2006 they applied for and received Medicaid benefits by lying on their application. They failed to disclose that they owned the properties and Mr. Qureshi claimed to be an employee at the corporation he was President and Chairman of. This continued through 2012. Over six years the Qureshis stole \$168,502 in benefits, the indictment charges.

The charges include Welfare Fraud in the Second Degree, Grand Larceny in the Second Degree and five counts of and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. If convicted of the top count, they each face 15 years in prison.

An indictment is an accusatory instrument and not proof of a defendant’s guilt.

The cases are being prosecuted by Deputy Bureau Chief Sabrina Thanse, Assistant District Attorney Heidi Bausk and Assistant District Attorney Krystyn Tendency in the Public Assistance Crimes Unit. Lauren Mack is Chief of the Public Assistance Crimes Unit.

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