



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**DOI ARRESTS CITY HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE CHARGED WITH STEALING FUNDS FROM A CHECK
MISTAKENLY ISSUED TO HER BY THE CITY EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today the arrest of a Community Associate with the City Health and Hospitals Corporation ("HHC") on a charge of cashing a \$4,680 check mistakenly issued to the defendant by the City Employees Retirement System ("NYCERS"). DOI began its investigation after it was notified by a Brooklyn check cashing establishment that the defendant cashed a NYCERS check that had been sent to her in error. The office of Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes is prosecuting the case.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "These charges are a warning to individuals who think tricking the City is a way to acquire some easy money. Fraudsters should know that the City is watching how taxpayer funds are distributed, and stealing City funds will only end one way, in prosecution."

ZORAIDA SAAVEDRA, 49, of Queens, was charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony; Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, a class E felony; and Petit Larceny and Criminal Possession of Stolen Property in the Fifth Degree, class A misdemeanors. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison, a class E by up to four years in prison and a class A misdemeanor by up to a year's incarceration.

SAAVEDRA is a Community Associate at King County Hospital Center ("KCHC") in Brooklyn, has worked at KCHC since July 2000, and receives an annual salary of approximately \$27,849.

According to the criminal complaint, in August 2009, SAAVEDRA applied for a loan from NYCERS, and NYCERS issued a loan check in the amount of \$4,680 to the defendant. When SAAVEDRA did not receive the check, NYCERS issued to her a replacement check in the same amount. SAAVEDRA requested that instead of sending a paper check NYCERS transfer the replacement funds directly into her bank account. DOI's investigation found that NYCERS transferred the funds to the defendant's bank account on September 2, 2009, and that the defendant also received a paper check from NYCERS, which she cashed on September 8, 2009 at a check cashing establishment in Brooklyn. The check cashing establishment contacted DOI in November 2009, reporting that the check cashed by SAAVEDRA had been voided and DOI's investigation found that the defendant did not have permission or authority to cash the check.

The City did not lose any money on the mistakenly-issued check. Because of the stop-payment action by NYCERS, the check cashing establishment suffered a monetary loss.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes, NYCERS Executive Director Diane D'Alessandro, HHC President Alan D. Aviles, and HHC Inspector General Norman Dion, and their staffs, for their assistance in the investigation. Commissioner Gill Hearn also thanked the check cashing establishment for its cooperation.

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The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for NYCERS, under the direction of Deputy Commissioner Vincent Green, Inspector General Faisal Khan, Deputy Inspector General Jeffrey Dolcimascolo, and Confidential Investigator Theresa Siame.

The Office of the Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes is prosecuting the case.

A criminal complaint is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.

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