



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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CITY HEALTH + HOSPITALS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ASSOCIATE CHARGED WITH FELONY ASSAULT OF A PATIENT

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced the arrest of a NYC Health + Hospitals ("NYC H+H") Behavioral Health Associate for assaulting a patient with an object that appeared to be a cellular telephone, inside a patient room at NYC H+H Bellevue in Manhattan on September 9, 2025. NYC H+H reported the assault to DOI, which prompted the investigation, which was conducted with the office of Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, which is prosecuting the case.

SHEREKA COOKE-ROBERTS, 30, of Brooklyn, N.Y., is charged with Assault in the Second Degree, a class D felony and Assault in the Third Degree, a class A misdemeanor. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison and a class A misdemeanor is punishable of up to year's incarceration. COOKE-ROBERTS was arraigned today and released on her own recognizance.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, "City hospitals rely on Behavioral Health Associates to provide care and support to persons with mental health needs. As charged, this Behavioral Health Associate assaulted a patient in her care, an illegal act that displayed blatant disregard for the responsibilities of her job and for the patient's well-being. I thank NYC H+H for referring this matter to DOI and the Manhattan District Attorney's Office for its partnership in this important investigation."

According to the criminal complaint, on September 9, 2025, a male and female were observed on video surveillance footage wearing hospital scrubs and approaching a patient's room on the 20th floor. The female, later identified as the defendant COOKE-ROBERTS, was observed on surveillance opening the door and entering the room; the video surveillance also showed an arm in a hospital gown extended from inside the room. The defendant was observed raising what appeared to be a large cellular telephone above her head, and forcefully swinging it downward in the direction of the arm onto something inside the room and beyond the view of video surveillance. The defendant was observed exiting the room and the video surveillance also showed an individual wearing a hospital gown immediately exit the room with what appeared to be fresh blood on her head, face, and hospital gown. An NYC H+H Police Captain reviewed the footage and identified COOKE-ROBERTS as the staff member holding the cellular phone. Photographs of the patient's injuries showed a visible gash and blood on the top of the patient's head.

COOKE-ROBERTS began her employment with NYC H+H in May 2019. She was suspended without pay on September 10, 2025. At the time of her suspension, she received an annual salary of \$62,719.

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Commissioner Strauber thanked Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg and his staff, including Assistant District Attorney Robert Wirtz of the District Attorney's Trial Bureau 30, which is prosecuting the case. Commissioner Strauber also thanked NYC H+H President and CEO Dr. Mitchell Katz and his staff for their cooperation and assistance.

At DOI, the investigation was conducted by Senior Confidential Investigator John Juliano of DOI's Office of the Inspector General for NYC Health + Hospitals, under the supervision of Assistant Inspector General Mark Moran, Deputy Inspector Robin A. Womack, Inspector General Cornelius Clancy, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan, and Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella.

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 and New York City's corruption watchdog. 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. DOI's strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.

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