



Additional information

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Earlier statement (March 19, 2010):

Statement on Employee Charged with Theft and Embezzlement

Alaska State Troopers arrest, charge Division of Public Assistance employee with embezzlement

(Anchorage, AK) — The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) is greatly saddened and shocked by the allegations of misconduct by an employee of the Division of Public Assistance.

“I want to assure the people of Alaska that this incident is not representative of the honest, hard work that our 3,600 department employees do every day for Alaskans in need,” DHSS Commissioner William Hogan said.

The department has been and continues cooperating fully with law enforcement.

Detailed information is available in the Department of Public Safety Media Advisory: <http://www.dps.state.ak.us/PIO/press.aspx#story1>.

Additional information (March 19, 2010):

- The Division of Public Assistance has robust checks and balances to make sure that benefits to Alaskans are paid appropriately. In fact, Alaska has received federal bonuses for being among the best states in the country when it comes to administering benefits accurately.
- Each year, the Division of Public Assistance has multiple federal and state audits. Quality controls are in place to ensure the prudent use of state and federal funds.

- While the Department of Health and Social Services can't stop an employee from committing a crime, the department does have policies in place that make it very difficult, and ultimately will discover if misconduct has occurred.
- A Division of Public Assistance employee, who is part of the section responsible for program oversight, discovered the alleged misconduct and reported it to division managers, who then reported it to State Troopers.
- "As a Public Assistance employee for over 30 years, I am not aware of anything of this magnitude happening in the past. I am saddened by this very rare and unfortunate incident," said Ellie Fitzjarrald, Director of Public Assistance.
- The person alleged to have committed embezzlement was a regional case reviewer, a position within the Division of Public Assistance that is in charge of examining public assistance cases that are initiated, checking them for accuracy and completeness.
- The department is taking steps to make sure that misconduct like this will not happen again.

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