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LAW ENFORCEMENT CONTINUE LAKEWOOD MEDICAID/GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE FRAUD CHARGES

Ocean County Prosecutor Joseph D. Coronato and State Comptroller Philip James Degnan announced today additional individuals charged within Lakewood, New Jersey by the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office for defrauding Medicaid and government assistance programs. The investigations initiated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Red Bank Office and the New Jersey Office of the State Comptroller – Medicaid Fraud Division, were expanded to include the US Social Security Administration, New Jersey Department of the Treasury – Office of Criminal Investigation, and the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office – Economic Crimes Unit.

OCPO detectives/prosecutors, along with its collaborating agencies served complaint summons for 3rd Degree Theft by Deception on the following individuals:

- Eliezer, 33, and Elkie, 31, Sorotzkin of West Spruce Street for allegedly wrongfully collected approximately \$74,960 in Medicaid benefits between January 2011 and December 2013.
- Samuel, 45, and Esther, 44, Serhofer of Whispering Pines Lane for allegedly wrongfully collecting approximately \$72,685 in Medicaid benefits between January 2009 and December 2013.
- Yisroel, 37, and Rachel, 34, Merkin of Hermosa Drive for allegedly wrongfully collecting approximately \$70,557.51 in Medicaid, SNAP, and HEAP benefits between January 2011 and December 2014.
- Jerome Menchel, 33, and Mottel Friedman, 30, of Pressburg Lane for allegedly wrongfully collecting \$63,839 in Medicaid and SNAP benefits between January 2011 and July 2014.
- Tzvi, 35, and Estee, 34, Braun of Ridge Avenue for allegedly wrongfully collecting \$62,746.74 in Medicaid, HEAP, and CICRF benefits between January 2009 and December 2013.
- Moshe, 30, and Nechama, 27, Hirschmann of Emmanuel Drive for allegedly wrongfully collecting \$53,418.39 in Medicaid and SNAP benefits between January 2011 and December 2015.

The nature of the criminal events investigated and basic charges allege that the defendants misrepresented their income, declaring amounts that were low enough to receive the program's benefits, when in fact their income was too high to qualify. The investigations revealed that the defendants received income from numerous sources that they failed to disclose on required program applications. As a result, they received benefits that they were not entitled to under these programs for themselves or family members. The Ocean County Prosecutors Office is prosecuting the above arrested individuals at the state level.

The investigation by all the participating agencies is continuing. OCPO and the prosecuting partners may add additional relevant charges (ie. Tax charges) as each case proceeds through the legal process. Anyone with any information is asked to contact Sergeant Mark Malinowski of the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office at (732) 929-2027. The media and the public are reminded that criminal charges are only allegations and that each defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in court.

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