

HRA Works With NYPD, Nassau County Health and Humans Services and Special Narcotics Prosecutor to Bust Medicaid Fraud

In a press conference on July 22, HRA and Nassau County Executive Thomas Suozzi, along with representatives from the NYPD and Special Narcotics Prosecutor's office, announced the arrest of a Medicaid recipient charged with reselling hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of prescription drugs. The accused, known as *Person X* because his name has not been released, filed numerous false prescriptions for expensive drugs like Oxycontin. *Person X* would have other Medicaid beneficiaries fill the forged prescriptions, and then buy the pills from them at \$200 per bottle. *Person X* could then sell the pills for approximately \$30 each.

Nassau County Health and Human Services (HHS) investigators first noticed the forged prescription slips in 2008. At the same time, the HRA Bureau of Fraud Investigation's Prescription Drug Division noticed similar forged prescriptions in Queens. Working together, Nassau County HHS and NYC HRA were able to track *Person X*'s forgery attempts, which led to the individual's arrest at a New York City pharmacy. Further investigation brought authorities to Unique Fashion, a boutique clothing store in the Bronx. *Person X* worked with the store's owners to sell the falsely-obtained pills on the premises. With this information, the NYPD were able to obtain a search warrant, and seized several bottles of illegally-obtained Oxycontin, Xanax and other pills, along with over \$300,000 in cash.

Commissioner Robert Doar commended the performance of all agencies involved in the arrests, saying, "The Bloomberg administration's approach to combating Medicaid fraud is multi-faceted and aggressive, and we are grateful to have local, statewide, and national partners in this effort." Nassau County Executive Thomas Suozzi also praised the agencies involved for their effective cooperation. "This is a great example of interoperability, of various government agencies working together."

HRA and Nassau County HHS were notified of the fraudulent prescriptions through an outreach program encouraging local pharmacies to call in suspicious requests, developed by HRA Bureau of Fraud Investigation's Prescription Drug Division. Since its inception in 2000, the Prescription Drug Division has conducted 15,000 investigations, resulting in over 2,100 arrests and Medicaid cost savings of \$50 million.