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NEWS RELEASE

Date: December 15, 2004
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Welfare-to-Work Employee and Eight Welfare Recipients Arrested in Fraudulent Benefit Scheme

$73,379 in Cash and Benefits Stolen via Illegal Electronic Transfers

NEWS CONFERENCE WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 15, 2004
DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
1421 ARCH ST., FIRST FLOOR PRESS ROOM
11AM

December 15, 2004---Philadelphia District Attorney Lynne Abraham and Pennsylvania Inspector General Donald Patterson today announced the results of their joint investigation and the arrests of nine people for the theft of cash assistance and food stamp benefits worth $73,379.

The first case listed is that of Quanda Byrd, arrested 12-9-04 and scheduled for a preliminary hearing on December 17, 2004 at 55th and Pine, Philadelphia. The other defendants were arrested between October 26, 2004 and December 8, 2004 and are scheduled for preliminary hearings on February 28, 2005 in room 606 of the Criminal Justice Center.

The joint investigation alleges that between June 1, 2003 and September 30, 2003, Olivia Sumpter, DOB 3-18-66, worked in a clerical position for the Department of Public Welfare as part of the welfare-to-work program. She was also receiving benefits from the Department of Public Welfare. She was assigned to the Philadelphia County Board of Assistance (PCBA) Ogontz District office, located at 301 East Chelten Avenue.

Sumpter's duties included entering transactions into the DPW computer system that added Cash Assistance and Food Stamp benefits to welfare clients' Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) accounts. These benefits would be available to the clients for withdrawal at any bank ATM machine or with any merchant authorized to accept Food Stamps.

Sumpter used her access to the DPW computer system to fraudulently transfer a total of $74,779 in Cash Assistance and Food Stamp benefits into her own DPW account, and into the accounts of her eight co-defendants. Olivia Sumpter personally obtained $21,639 in the fraudulently transferred benefits, and in addition, demanded kickbacks from her co-defendants in exchange for placing benefits in their EBT accounts.

The scheme unraveled when a supervisor from the PCBA West District Office noticed a number of one-time issuances of large amounts of Cash Assistance benefits that were issued to one of the co-defendants. In order to issue benefits, a clerical worker must sign onto the system using his or her own social security number and password. The clerical worker must then use a five digit ‘worker identification number’ assigned to the client’s caseworker to authorize the benefits. The ‘worker identification number’ can only be used when the caseworker is authorizing benefits within the caseworker’s district. In situations where the welfare case has been transferred to another district, a ‘universal’ number is used, and it is not possible to identify any specific caseworker. The investigation alleges that this is how Olivia Sumpter transferred the cash and benefits.

The investigation further showed that the social security number that belonged to PCBA Ogontz District Office clerical worker Olivia Sumpter appeared in the system as the identifying number of the clerical worker who processed each of the fraudulent transactions. Using that social security number, the supervisor was able to determine that two other case records assigned to West District contained large unauthorized one-time issuances. The matter was then turned over to the Office of Inspector General for further investigation.

The investigation revealed that the case records of a total of eight other welfare clients assigned to PCBA West, Delancey, Lehigh, Vine, and Unity Districts were identified as having been processed by DPW clerical worker Olivia Sumpter, and she was responsible

for the large unauthorized one-time issuances posted to their accounts between June 1, 2003 and September 30, 2003.

The certified transcripts for each of the nine aforementioned welfare clients reflect that in addition to the benefits each of these clients were entitled to, each of them had at least one, and in many cases, numerous unauthorized one-time issuances of Cash Assistance and Food Stamp benefits issued to them.

A total of eighty-one unauthorized one-time issuances, totaling $73,379, were issued to the nine aforementioned welfare clients between June 1 and September 30, 2003. In each case, a "universal worker identification number" appeared as the authorizing computer code, and social security number that belonged to Olivia Sumpter appeared as the identifying number of the clerical worker who processed each of the eighty-one transactions.

In every case, each DPW client's EBT card was used to withdraw the transferred funds. On the same date that one or more transfers into an EBT account occurred, one or more withdrawals were made that when totaled, equaled the amount transferred into the EBT account on that date. Investigators also determined that in none of the cases did the DPW client report his or her EBT card lost or stolen.

In none of the cases did the caseworkers authorize the issuance of the large sums of benefits issued to the respective clients. In none of these cases did any supervisor or manager authorize Olivia Sumpter or anyone else to issue benefits to any of the aforementioned welfare clients.

The following individuals have been arrested and charged as follows:

OLIVIA SUMPTER a/k/a LIVIA SUMPTER for the fraudulent transfer of $74,779 in Cash Assistance and Food Stamp benefits, and the fraudulent receipt of $21,639 in Cash Assistance and Food Stamp benefits:

Welfare Fraud, 62 P.S. §481(a) F-3,

Theft by Unlawful Taking, 18 Pa.C.S. §3921 F-3,

Theft by Deception, 18 Pa.C.S. §3922 F-3

Receiving Stolen Property, 18 Pa.C.S. §3925 F-3,
Tampering With Public Records or Information, 18 Pa.C.S. §4911 F-3
Unauthorized Use of Computers, 18 Pa.C.S. §7611 F-3,
Access Device Fraud, 18 Pa.C.S. §4106 F-3,
Conspiracy 18 Pa.C.S. §903 F-3
Intimidation of Witnesses 18 Pa.C.S. §4952 M-2

FIFI DUDLEY for the fraudulent receipt of $10,200 in Cash Assistance and Food Stamp benefits:
Welfare Fraud, 62 P.S. §481(a) F-3,
Theft by Unlawful Taking, 18 Pa.C.S. §3921 F-3,
Theft by Deception, 18 Pa.C.S. §3922 F-3
Receiving Stolen Property, 18 Pa.C.S. §3925 F-3,
Unauthorized Use of Computers 18 Pa.C.S. §7611 F-3,
Access Device Fraud, 18 Pa.C.S. §4106 F-3,
Conspiracy 18 Pa.C.S. §903 F-3.

LESLIE MURRAY for the fraudulent receipt of $18,350 in Cash Assistance benefits:
Welfare Fraud, 62 P.S. §481(a) F-3,
Theft by Unlawful Taking, 18 Pa.C.S. §3921 F-3,
Theft by Deception, 18 Pa.C.S. §3922 F-3
Receiving Stolen Property, 18 Pa.C.S. §3925 F-3,
Unauthorized Use of Computers, 18 Pa.C.S. §7611 F-3,
Access Device Fraud, 18 Pa.C.S. §4106 F-3,
Conspiracy 18 Pa.C.S. §903 F-3

DEBORA O'GORMAN for the fraudulent receipt of $4,250 in Cash Assistance and Food Stamp benefits:
Welfare Fraud, 62 P.S. §481(a) F-3,
Theft by Unlawful Taking, 18 Pa.C.S. §3921 F-3,
Theft by Deception, 18 Pa.C.S. §3922 F-3
Receiving Stolen Property, 18 Pa.C.S. §3925 F-3,
Unauthorized Use of Computers 18 Pa.C.S. §7611 F-3,

Access Device Fraud, 18 Pa.C.S. §4106 F-3,
Conspiracy 18 Pa.C.S. §903 F-3

OLIVIA WHITE for the fraudulent receipt of $9,750 in Cash Assistance and Food Stamp benefits:
Welfare Fraud, 62 P.S. §481(a) F-3,
Theft by Unlawful Taking, 18 Pa.C.S. §3921 F-3,
Theft by Deception, 18 Pa.C.S. §3922 F-3
Receiving Stolen Property, 18 Pa.C.S. §3925 F-3,
Unauthorized Use of Computers 18 Pa.C.S. §7611 F-3,
Access Device Fraud, 8 Pa.C.S. §4106 F-3,
Conspiracy 18 Pa.C.S. §903 F-3

JOEL POLK for the fraudulent receipt of $2,700 in Cash Assistance and Food Stamp benefits:
Welfare Fraud, 62 P.S. §481(a) M-1,
Theft by Unlawful Taking, 18 Pa.C.S. §3921 F-3,
Theft by Deception, 18 Pa.C.S. §3922 F-3
Receiving Stolen Property, 18 Pa.C.S. §3925 F-3,
Unauthorized Use of Computers 18 Pa.C.S. §7611
F-3, Access Device Fraud, 18 Pa.C.S. §4106 F-3,
Conspiracy 18 Pa.C.S.§903 F-3.

PAMELA AUSTIN for the fraudulent receipt of $1,500 in Cash Assistance benefits:
Welfare Fraud, 62 P.S. §481(a) M-1,
Theft by Unlawful Taking, 18 Pa.C.S. §3921 M-1,
Theft by Deception, 18 Pa.C.S. §3922 M-1
Receiving Stolen Property, 18 Pa.C.S. §3925 M-1,
Unauthorized Use of Computers 18 Pa.C.S. §7611 F-3,
Access Device Fraud, 18 Pa.C.S. §4106 F-3,
Conspiracy 18 Pa.C.S. §903 F-3

QUANDA BYRD for the fraudulent receipt of $3,790 in Cash Assistance and Food Stamp benefits:

Welfare Fraud, 62 P.S. §481(a) F-3,

Theft by Unlawful Taking, 18 Pa.C.S. §3921 F-3,

Theft by Deception, 18 Pa.C.S. §3922 F-3

Receiving Stolen Property, 18 Pa.C.S. §3925 F-3,

Unauthorized Use of Computers 18 Pa.C.S. §7611 F-3,

Access Device Fraud, 18 Pa.C.S. §4106 F-3,

Conspiracy 18 Pa.C.S. §903 F-3.

ALEANDRA ELLIOTT for the fraudulent receipt of $500 in Cash Assistance benefits:

Welfare Fraud, 62 P.S. §481(a) M-3,

Theft by Unlawful Taking, 18 Pa.C.S. §3921 M-1,

Theft by Deception, 18 Pa.C.S. §3922 M-1

Receiving Stolen Property, 18 Pa.C.S. §3925 M-1,

Unauthorized Use of Computers 18 Pa.C.S. §7611 F-3,

Access Device Fraud, 18 Pa.C.S. §4106 F-3,

Conspiracy 18 Pa.C.S. §903 F-3

If convicted of all charges, the defendants face a maximum of 58 years in prison.