



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CITY HRA EMPLOYEE ARRESTED FOR \$125,000 SOCIAL SECURITY FRAUD**  
*-Employee stole disability benefits belonging to a deceased relative-*

Rose Gill Hearn, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), along with Edward J. Ryan, Special Agent in Charge, Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General (SSA-OIG); and U. S. Secret Service Special Agent in Charge for the New York Field Office James M. Cawley, announced today the arrest of BURNESTHA WILDER, an employee of the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA), for fraudulently obtaining over \$125,000 in benefits from the Social Security Administration Disability Benefits Program.

WILDER, 55, from the Bronx, has been charged with theft of government funds. If convicted, she faces up to 18 months in prison.

The investigation determined that WILDER held a joint bank account with a relative, a Social Security disability beneficiary, who died in January 1996. Following the relative's death, WILDER continued to allow the disability payments to be deposited into the account from which she made withdrawals to pay for personal expenses. From January 1996 through September 2006, WILDER fraudulently obtained approximately \$125,776 in benefits.

WILDER is a Supervisor Level I, and has been with HRA since August of 1984. She earns a salary of \$49,003 per year, and is assigned on loan from HRA to work with the New York State Department of Health conducting Medicaid related computer training at Lincoln Hospital and other locations, as needed. WILDER will be suspended from her position with HRA.

This investigation was conducted by SSA-OIG Assistant Special Agent in Charge John Grasso, Special Agent Adam Schneider, U.S. Secret Service Special Agent Ellen E. Smith and DOI Assistant Commissioner Benjamin Defibaugh, DOI's Inspector General for HRA Rebecca Holland and members of her staff, including Deputy Inspector General Joseph Caputo.

This case will be prosecuted by the Office of the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York.

Criminal complaints are accusations, defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

*DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. 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.*

***Get the worms out of the Big Apple.***  
***To report someone ripping off the city, call DOI at (212) 825-5955***