Jul 15, 2020

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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Woman Arrested for Exploiting Elderly Adult



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit today announced the arrest of Emily Royster for exploiting an elderly and disabled adult. The investigation revealed that Royster siphoned more than $14,000 from an elderly victim's bank account over a seven-month period. Royster allegedly transferred funds for personal use with the intent to deprive the victim of the use or benefits of the funds, including making nursing home payments.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "The victim relied on this defendant and put her in a position of trust and confidence to make sure she was taken care of. It disgusts me when one can so easily take advantage of a vulnerable adult all for personal benefit. While the defendant was gallivanting around the country with the victim's funds, this elderly victim was at risk of losing nursing home care. My office will not allow the exploitation of any elderly adult and this defendant will be held responsible."

Acting on a complaint received from the Florida Department of Children and Families' Adult Protective Services, MFCU began investigating Royster after the victim's nursing home bill went unpaid and the victim's bank account lacked funds to pay bills. Royster allegedly removed money from the victim's account using the mobile application Zelle. Zelle is a mobile app that allows individuals to easily transfer money to others. The investigation revealed that Royster withdrew the money from the victim's account multiple times for personal use, including Airbnb stays in Georgia and Massachusetts.

To read the redacted affidavit, click here.

Royster turned herself into custody at the Leon County Sheriff's Office. Royster is charged with one count of exploitation of an elderly adult $10,000 or more, a second-degree felony. If convicted, Royster faces up to 15 years in prison and $10,000 in fines. MFCU will prosecute the case through an agreement with the State Attorney's Office in the Second Judicial Circuit.

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The Florida Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit investigates and prosecutes providers that intentionally defraud the state's Medicaid program through fraudulent billing practices. Medicaid fraud essentially steals from Florida's taxpayers. From Jan. 2019 to the present, Attorney General Moody's MFCU has obtained more than $40 million in settlements and judgments. Additionally, the MFCU investigates allegations of patient abuse, neglect and exploitation in facilities receiving payments under the Medicaid program.