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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG's MFCU Arrests Woman for Abusing Disabled Adult



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and the Leon County Sheriff's Office arrested an employee of a Tallahassee developmental center for abusing a disabled adult. Latessa C. Smith, 25, served as a direct support professional at the center. According to the investigation, Smith retrieved a belt from a closet and struck a disabled adult victim. The victim allegedly received welts on the face and abdomen.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "It is absolutely unconscionable that someone would use their position of trust to victimize and abuse those disabled individuals in their care. I am proud of my Medicaid Fraud Control Unit investigators and law enforcement who made sure this person was put behind bars."

To read the redacted PCA, click here.

Smith is charged with one count of abuse of a disabled adult, a third-degree felony. The Attorney General's Office, through an agreement with the State Attorney's Office in the Second Judicial Circuit, will prosecute the case

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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. Additionally, the MFCU investigates allegations of patient abuse, neglect, and exploitation in facilities receiving payments under the Medicaid program.