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NEWS

Illinois Department of Insurance

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Former Crystal Lake Police Officer Indicted for Fraud *Defendant Accused of Making False Statements Regarding His Medical Condition in Order to Obtain Benefits*

CHICAGO - Illinois Department of Insurance (DOI) Director Andrew Boron today announced a recent workers' compensation fraud investigation has resulted in an indictment of a former Crystal Lake Police Officer. Michael Avila was arraigned earlier today. He is charged with workers' compensation fraud, insurance fraud, theft of government property, and theft by deception in connection to statements he made in order to create the impression that the nature and extent of an injury he claimed to have suffered to his wrist while at work was more extensive than it really was.

"We take accusations of fraud very seriously and will investigate to determine the merits of a claim. I hope our reports about workers' compensation fraud cases and convictions send a clear message about this crime. We will investigate perpetrators and work with law enforcement to make sure they are prosecuted," said DOI Director Andrew Boron.

The investigation was conducted by the Department of Insurance Workers' Compensation Fraud Unit. Video surveillance showed Mr. Avila lifting weights at the Crystal Lake police station in the month following the injury while he was assigned to light duty. Additional video surveillance showed Avila not only lifting weights, but working as a personal trainer after being placed on light duty and subsequently taken off work completely several months after the initial wrist injury due to alleged aggravation or re-injury.

DOI referred the case to the Illinois Attorney General's Office for prosecution.

"The worker's compensation system is intended to cover costs for employees who are injured on the job, but the evidence in this case shows that the defendant schemed to defraud the program for his own financial benefit," said Attorney General Lisa Madigan.

Avila filed a case with the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission for his wrist injury in October of 2012. That case was later voluntarily dismissed.

For more information about Workers' Compensation Fraud, including matters that may involve fraud perpetrated by a claimant, visit the DOI website at <http://insurance.illinois.gov/WCFU/default.asp>. To report an employer, healthcare provider, attorney, insurance agent or company, contact the Workers' Compensation Fraud Unit at 877-WCF-UNIT (877-923-8648).

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