



Illinois Ethics Matters

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Honesty, Integrity, Service

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of the Illinois Governor

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Recent News

- The OEIG's Hiring & Employment Monitoring (HEM) Division released its annual report for calendar year 2020 and the final quarter of 2020. This marks the first full year of public reporting by HEM. Among other work, in 2020, HEM issued 104 advisories to agencies reviewing hiring processes and making recommendations for improvement. HEM's annual report is available on the OEIG's website [here](#).

Recently Published OEIG Investigations

The OEIG investigates allegations of conflicts of interest that may result in State employees deriving a personal benefit from decisions or actions made in their official capacity. State agencies often have policies prohibiting an employee from having a private interest, such as a personal relationship or financial interest, that conflicts or appears to conflict with the employee's work duties and responsibilities. Employees may also have an affirmative duty to disclose potential conflicts of interest. The following two OEIG investigations recently made public are examples of areas of conflicts of interest that should be avoided.

In OEIG Case #18-01372, a former Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) employee processed Medicaid claims for healthcare providers as part of her official duties. The HFS employee had the authority to issue "overrides" if a claim was initially rejected, resulting in payment to the claimant. The investigation uncovered that after the HFS employee accepted future employment with a private hospital system, she continued to communicate with the hospital system, including approving two overrides benefiting her future employer. The employee did not inform HFS that she had accepted the job offer with the hospital system until two weeks before leaving HFS. The OEIG found that the employee had violated HFS's conflict of interest policies. A copy of the report, [In re: Michelle Ferguson \(Case #18-01372\)](#), is available on the OEIG website.

In OEIG Case #13-02420, an Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) caseworker married a DHS customer when the customer had active cases with DHS. The caseworker violated DHS policy by failing to notify DHS of the marriage. In addition, the OEIG found that the caseworker had handled one of her husband's cases, which also violated a DHS policy that prohibits employees from handling cases for relatives or household members. The OEIG recommended that the caseworker be terminated, and ultimately DHS discharged the caseworker after a union grievance process. (The OEIG completed its investigation in 2015, but the grievance process was not concluded until 2020.) DHS also collected an overpayment to the caseworker's household. A copy of this report, [In re: Lisa Simmons \(Case #13-02420\)](#), is also available on the OEIG website.

Any State employee with questions about agency conflict of interest policies should contact the agency's ethics officer. A list of agency ethics officers is available on the OEIG's website [here](#).