



Illinois Ethics Matters

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Honesty, Integrity, Service

A newsletter from the Office of Executive Inspector General for the Agencies
of the Illinois Governor

Office of Executive Inspector General

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Announcements

- The OEIG released its 2023 First Quarter Report for its Hiring & Employment Monitoring (HEM) Division. Among other compliance activities, HEM reviewed 120 exempt certification requests in the quarter, the most in a quarter since the OEIG began publicly reporting in 2020. These certifications ensure that incumbents in Exempt List positions are minimally qualified. The HEM report is available [here](#).
- OEIG staff is scheduled to present at the Executive Ethics Commission Ethics Officer Conference on May 2, 2023. The presentation will address the annual cycle of Ethics Officers' duties, among other issues.

IDPH Employees Disciplined for Misuse of Patient Photos

The Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program Act permits the legal use of cannabis to treat or alleviate the pain or other symptoms associated with a terminal illness or other debilitating medical conditions. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is responsible for maintaining a "confidential registry of qualifying patients authorized to engage in the medical use of cannabis and their caregivers." In order to obtain an identification card for the registry, a patient must submit an application to IDPH that includes a photo of the patient (and designated caretaker if available).

The OEIG received a complaint that the Chief of the Division of Medical Cannabis printed a patient photo and put it in a "Medical Cannabis yearbook," which contained other patient photos with inappropriate comments. During the investigation, OEIG investigators obtained a binder with the IDPH Illinois Medical Cannabis Patient Program logo and the label "MCPP YEARBOOK" on the cover. The "MCPP YEARBOOK" contained 13 pages, including 8 pages of patient photos with demeaning captions, resulting in the mockery of IDPH patients. The OEIG discovered that the "MCPP YEARBOOK" was maintained for an extended period of time in an open area of the Division of Medical Cannabis, where it was accessible to anyone who may have worked on or visited the floor.

The OEIG concluded that five IDPH employees, including the Division Chief, participated in, contributed to, or promoted the inappropriate use of the "MCPP YEARBOOK," amounting to conduct unbecoming in violation of the State Illinois Code of Personal Conduct. As a result of the investigation, two employees received 10-day suspensions, and one received a five-day suspension. The Division Chief resigned after the investigation. A temporary employee was no longer employed by IDPH. OEIG Case No. 21-02509 is available on the OEIG's [website](#).

This case and another recently published OEIG case ([Case No. 19-01177](#)) involved employees manufacturing documents claiming it was a form of "humor" even when their actions were designed to denigrate or humiliate others. Such unprofessional behavior and attitudes have no place in the modern workplace. As seen in these cases, there are serious consequences for employees and managers at all levels who are involved, participate, or fail to stop the production or dissemination of such inappropriate materials.