



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 26, 2013
Contact: Diane Ward, Office of Communications
(518) 549-0200
diane.ward@justicecenter.ny.gov

New Charge Filed Against Group Home Employee Accused of Having Sex with Resident *Investigation Uncovers Allegation Marijuana Use at Facility with Residents*

Camillus, NY— NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs Special Prosecutor Patricia E. Gunning announced today an additional charge has been filed against Markeem Chaplin (11/11/91), an employee of Toomey Residential and Community Services. Chaplin was arrested in October 2013 for allegedly having sexual contact with a 16 year old resident of the facility. He now faces a second misdemeanor count of Endangering the Welfare of a Child for allegedly smoking marijuana with residents of the facility.

The Justice Center first alerted local law enforcement officials after its Vulnerable Persons Central Register (VPCR) Hotline received a report from a staff member at the group home alleging the sexual abuse of a resident. Justice Center investigators are assisting the Onondaga County Sheriff's Department with the investigation. This latest charge is in addition to the original endangerment count and a felony charge of committing a Criminal Sexual Act in the third degree.

Chaplin, who lives at 202 South Avenue, Syracuse, is scheduled for arraignment on the new charge December 10, 2013 in Camillus Town Court. He was terminated from his position after the first charges were lodged against him. The case is being prosecuted by the Onondaga County District Attorney's office.

The Justice Center and its statewide hotline and incident reporting system began operations on June 30, 2013. It is staffed 24-hours a day, seven days a week by trained professionals who receive reports of allegations of abuse and neglect of people with special needs. Once a report is received by its (VPCR) Hotline, it is logged and assessed. Serious cases of abuse or neglect are assigned to the Justice Center's investigation team or, when appropriate, to a local law enforcement agency for follow-up.

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The Justice Center also maintains a statewide registry of all persons who have been found to be responsible for serious or repeated acts of abuse and neglect. Once placed on the registry, known as the “Staff Exclusion List” or SEL, they are prohibited by law from ever working again with people with disabilities or special needs.

Toomey Residential and Community Services is licensed by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), which is one of six state agencies under the jurisdiction of the Justice Center. It also oversees certain facilities or programs that are operated, licensed or certified by the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), the Department of Health (DOH), the Office of Mental Health, (OMH), the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), and the State Education Department (SED).

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Editor’s note: In compliance with Disciplinary Rule 7-107A of the Code of Professional Responsibility, you are advised that a charge is an accusation and that a defendant is presumed