

CITY OF NEW YORK
**THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF INVESTIGATION
FOR THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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September 5, 2019

Hon. Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor
New York City Public Schools
Department of Education
52 Chambers Street, Room 314
New York, NY 10007

Re: Jaclyn Petrov
SCI Case #2017-6113

Dear Chancellor Carranza:

An investigation conducted by this office has substantiated that Jaclyn Petrov, a Related Service Provider (“RSP”) hired to provide counseling services to an 11-year-old student (“Student A”), received more than \$6,200 from the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”), for services she failed to provide.¹ In addition, Petrov submitted falsified invoices for payment to the DOE.

I. Investigative Findings

This investigation began in September 2017, when the Associate Director of the DOE’s Office of Impartial Hearing Order Implementation Unit Sapna Kapoor called the Office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District (“SCI”) to report that a law firm representing Student A and his family alleged that Petrov submitted false invoices to the DOE and failed to provide mandated services to Student A.

SCI investigators spoke with Mother A who explained that as a result of an impartial hearing, the DOE was ordered to provide Student A with sixty-three, half hour long counseling sessions. Mother A scheduled directly with Petrov, who had her first session with Student A on August 30, 2016.² Mother A told investigators that Petrov asked her to sign several blank DOE Vendor Monthly Service Invoice forms (“MSI”), meant to track and bill for an RSP’s individual sessions with the student, during Student A’s first session. According to a log kept by Mother A, Petrov provided counseling to Student A on nine separate dates, totaling 16 sessions, with the

¹ Jaclyn Petrov remains an active RSP for DOE contracted agency related service provider Multilingual Psychotherapy Centers, Inc.

² Mother A was referred to Petrov by the DOE Committee on Special Education.

last session taking place on November 18, 2016.³ On December 3, 2016, Mother A received a text message from Petrov in which she was informed that Petrov would be on vacation and would return on January 5, 2017. Petrov wrote Mother A that she would resume providing services for Student A upon her return. Mother A told investigators that she never heard from Petrov again.

With Petrov having not resumed services, Mother A contacted the DOE to request a new provider be assigned for Student A. However, the DOE representative informed Mother A that Student A already received the maximum number of sessions, and was no longer eligible for services. Mother A obtained copies of the MSI forms submitted by Petrov for services provided to Student A between September 2016 and February 2017, which revealed that Petrov billed the DOE for fifty-five dates on which Mother A said no services were provided.⁴ On three additional dates, the duration of the services entered on the MSI was longer than the services actually provided to Student A. SCI investigators showed Mother A the MSI submitted by Petrov for services provided to Student A. Mother A identified her signature on the MSI from September and October 2016, however, she did not believe the signatures on the other four invoices were hers.⁵

Through her attorney, Jaclyn Petrov declined the opportunity to speak with SCI investigators citing her 5th Amendment rights.

SCI investigators reviewed MSI submitted by Petrov for payment to the DOE between September 2016 and February 2017, which showed that Petrov billed the DOE for sixty-three, hour-long sessions during that time period, for services purportedly provided to Student A.

SCI has determined that Petrov falsely billed the DOE for a total of fifty-seven and one half hours of services, at a billing rate of \$108 per hour, a total of \$6,210.00, for services that she did not provide to Student A.⁶

In December 2018, this matter was referred to the New York County District Attorney (“DANY”) for review and appropriate prosecutorial action. The matter is currently pending with DANY.

II. Conclusion and Recommendation

Jaclyn Petrov received more than \$6,200 from the DOE for therapeutic services that she billed for, but did not provide. It is the recommendation of this office that the DOE Office of Auditor General conduct a comprehensive audit of MSI submitted by Petrov for payment to the

³ RSP's are allowed to bill for multiple sessions on the same date. In this case, Petrov met with Student A for one hour-long session on four occasions, and for two hour-long sessions on two other dates.

⁴ The MSI also omitted two dates on which Mother A said Student A received three-hours of services from Petrov.

⁵ SCI investigators attempted to speak with Student A but he was either unresponsive or unable to provide information.

⁶ According to Kapoor, Petrov was paid a total of \$7,668 by the DOE for services provided to Student A.

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DOE over the past several years, and that Petrov be required to repay the DOE for payments she improperly received for services not rendered. In addition, it is the recommendation of this office that a problem code be added to this vendor's file, barring her from future employment with the DOE or with any of its vendors in the future.

It is also incumbent upon the DOE to strengthen and centralize the MSI process to prevent similar fraudulent acts in the future. The DOE should require RSP vendors to adhere to a verifiable timecard-like system, rather than monthly handwritten invoices, as a condition of future eligibility as a vendor.

Please respond in writing within 30 days of receipt of this letter to acknowledge whether you accept the policy and procedure recommendation, as well as any action taken or contemplated regarding Jaelyn Petrov.

We are sending a copy of this letter to the Office of Legal Services. In addition, we are sending a copy of this letter to the New York State Department of Education for whatever action they deem appropriate. Should you have any inquiries regarding the above, please contact me directly at (212) 510-1418.

Sincerely,

ANASTASIA COLEMAN
Special Commissioner of Investigation
for the New York City School District

By:



Daniel I. Schlachet
First Deputy Commissioner

AC:DS:lr

c: Howard Friedman, Esq.
Karen Antoine, Esq.
Katherine Rodi, Esq.