

PRESS RELEASE

Probable Cause Found in Alleged Ethics Violations by Former UCONN Health Center Employee Priscilla Dickman

First Public Hearing of the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board to Follow

August 17, 2009

Former UCONN Health Center Employee Priscilla Dickman, of Coventry, CT, is facing a public hearing before the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board following a confidential hearing at which Judge Trial Referee William Wollenberg found probable cause to believe that Dickman violated use-of-office and outside employment provisions of the Code of Ethics. Dickman, who served as a Medical Technologist at the University of Connecticut Health Center, is accused of using state equipment, resources and time in furtherance of her private jewelry and travel consulting businesses.

Connecticut General Statutes § 1-84 (c) prohibits a state employee from using her public position to obtain financial gain for herself or a business with which she is associated. By performing work in furtherance of her jewelry and travel consulting businesses using state resources including computers, telephones, e-mail systems, state time and state-provided Internet access, Dickman allegedly used her public position to obtain financial gain for herself and/or her businesses in violation of this section.

Connecticut General Statutes § 1-84 (b) prohibits a state employee from accepting other employment which will impair her independence of judgment as to her official duties. The complaint alleges violations of this provision, as Dickman allegedly performed activities for her jewelry and travel businesses during state time while being compensated for her official duties.

In his ruling from the bench on August 13, Judge Wollenberg noted that the evidence, including the volume of incidents, made it "very clear" that probable cause was established at the hearing on all eight counts of the complaint.

A public hearing is scheduled for September 11, 2009 and marks the first such hearing since the formation of the Office of State Ethics in 2005. A judge trial referee will preside over the public hearing and the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board (CEAB) will sit as the jury and decide whether the Code of Ethics was violated. The maximum penalty for each violation of the Code of Ethics is \$10,000.

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