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Cover Story

Former MHMRA Psychologist Leddy Convicted of Fraud

By Paul Knight, Wednesday, Apr. 21 2010 @ 2:45PM Categories: Courts

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A former psychologist with the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County, who evaluated defendants in close to 1,000 criminal cases during his time with the agency, recently pled guilty to Medicaid fraud.



Courtesy of Montgomery County Sheriff's Office

Matthew Leddy, the psychologist, received a 30-day jail sentence and was required to pay \$228,747.81 in restitution to the state, according to a representative with the Attorney General's office, the agency that prosecuted Leddy. He was also sentenced to 340 hours of community service and had to pay another \$10,000 in fines.

"I think it was a favorable resolution for all parties," Philip Hilder, Leddy's attorney, tells Hair Balls. "[Leddy] has made restitution and would like to just move on with his life."

Hair Balls and the Houston Press have been particularly interested in the Leddy case because a couple years ago, Leddy evaluated Alexander Hatcher, a man that was diagnosed as bipolar and schizophrenic by MHMRA and was originally arrested for criminal mischief. Hatcher, who the Press wrote about in an August 2008 cover story, didn't receive his meds in jail and eventually was accused of assaulting a guard.

Leddy told the court that Hatcher was competent to stand trial, and after being found guilty, Hatcher was sentenced to 53 years in prison.

It's unlikely that Leddy's conviction will have any effect on the work he did in the criminal cases, because the crimes took place when he worked for a private practice in Montgomery County, before he was hired by MHMRA.

But after he was arrested, Hair Balls found out that Leddy had evaluated children for Montgomery County Child Protective Services while working at his private practice.

We spoke with Johana Scot, an advocate with the Parent Guidance Center who had worked on CPS cases that involved Leddy. In one of them, Scot said, she convinced lawyers that the evaluation of a four-year-old girl was bunk, and orders to remove the girl from her mother were overturned.

"If the state is bringing fraud charges against [Leddy], it's the state's responsibilities to go back and see if he did the right thing for these families," Scot said.

Leddy will spend his month-long sentence in the Montgomery County Jail, and according

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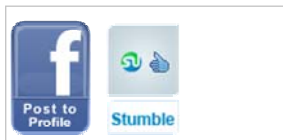


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to Hilder, he hasn't started serving it. Although Leddy isn't allowed to work under government contract, on and Medicare/Medicaid cases, Hilder said Leddy plans to continue work as a psychologist.

Alexander Hatcher hasn't been so lucky. Last month, an appeals court upheld his 53 year sentence.



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