

Department of Justice

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Western District of New York

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PUBLIC OFFICIAL SENTENCED FOR RECEIVING ILLEGAL GRATUITIES

BUFFALO, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Gregory Szarpa, 60, of Sloan, N.Y., who was convicted of receiving illegal gratuities as a public official, was sentenced to one year in prison and one year supervised release by U.S. District Court Judge Richard J. Arcara.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Edward H. White, who handled the case, stated that Szarpa was employed as an electrician and purchasing agent at the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) Hospital in Buffalo, N.Y. Between 1992 and 2008, the defendant accepted gift certificates, gift cards, and cash totaling approximately \$40,000 from sales agents with Lawson Products, Inc. Szarpa accepted these gifts for official acts performed, that is, the purchase of products on behalf of the VA Hospital from Lawson Products.

The sentencing is the culmination of an investigation on the part of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Jeffrey G. Hughes.

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