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## 2 couples indicted on charges they bilked N.J. out of Medicaid, food stamp funds

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By MaryAnn Spoto | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

couples.png

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Yosaf Laskin, 43 and his wife Gila Neger , 41 of Lakewood were one of two Ocean County couples indicted on Medicaid or food stamp fraud. (Ocean County Jail)

TOMS RIVER -- Two Ocean County couples were indicted on charges they bilked the state out of hundreds of thousands of dollars in public assistance by underreporting their income.

Peter Cerruto, 38, and his wife Lisa Cerruto, of Barnegat, were charged on Thursday with theft by deception, Medicaid fraud, tampering with government records, filing fraudulent tax returns and failure to pay tax related to their application to New Jersey Family Care, a Medicaid program, said Ocean County Prosecutor Joseph Coronato.

From an investigation with the New Jersey Office of the State Comptroller and with help from the state Division of Taxation, detectives were able to determine that the Cerrutos received about \$69,000 from the state Medicaid program between February 2010 and July 2013 by underreporting how much money they earned, Coronato said.

They face up to five years in prison if they are convicted of any of the charges.

**RELATED: Lakewood couple bilked Medicaid, food stamp program, authorities say**

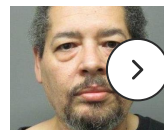
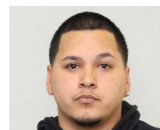
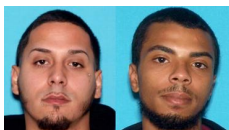
In a separate case, Yosaf Laskin, 43, and his wife Gila Neger, 41, of Lakewood, reported their income as less than they actually earned so that they could qualify for Medicaid insurance coverage and food assistance, which is known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Coronato said.

He said Laskin gave false information on his applications for Medicaid and received \$148,000 in benefits to which he was not entitled between November 2010 and July 2013. Neger is accused of filing a false application for food stamps and getting \$8,000 worth of benefits that she should not have received during that same period, the prosecutor said.

Laskin was charged with theft by deception, Medicaid fraud and tampering with government records. His wife is charged with theft by deception and tampering with government records. They both were charged with filing fraudulent tax returns for 2010 and 2011, he said.

If convicted of the most serious charge - theft by deception - Laskin faces up to 10 years in prison while his wife faces up to five years in prison. Her theft charge carries a lighter penalty because less money is involved.

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