

NEW YORK
state department of
HEALTH

Howard A. Zucker, M.D., J.D.
Acting Commissioner of Health

Sue Kelly
Executive Deputy Commissioner

August 14, 2014

Mr. Thomas P. DiNapoli
New York State Comptroller
Office of the State Comptroller
110 State Street
Albany, New York 12236

Dear Comptroller DiNapoli:

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 170 of New York State Executive Law, I hereby transmit to you a copy of the New York State Department of Health's comments related to the Office of the State Comptroller's final audit report 2012-S-94 entitled, "Selected Employee Travel Expenses."

Please feel free to contact Ms. Amy Nickson, Office of Governmental Affairs at (518) 473-1124 with any questions.

Sincerely,



Howard A. Zucker, M.D., J.D.
Acting Commissioner of Health

Enclosure

cc: Ms. Nickson

**Department of Health
Comments on the
Office of the State Comptroller's
Final Audit Report 2012-S-94 Entitled
Selected Employee Travel Expenses**

The following are the Department of Health's (Department) comments in response to the Office of the State Comptroller's (OSC) Final Audit Report 2012-S-94 entitled, "Selected Employee Travel Expenses."

Recommendation #1:

Strengthen oversight of travel expenses to improve the Department's ability to guard against waste and abuse. Actions should include, but not be limited to:

- verifications of the necessity and legitimacy of travel expenses and appropriate use of travel cards;
- awareness of employee travel patterns, locations and modes of travel;
- timely reviews of travel vouchers; and
- periodic evaluations of official station designations.

Response #1:

The Department has and will continue to instruct travelers and supervisors to adhere to the OSC travel rules and regulations. We will emphasize the supervisor's role in the approval process and also the timeliness of travel voucher review. Both traveler and supervisor will be reminded to attend any Business Service Center (BSC) travel training as offered. We have met with the BSC and discussed the need for additional training of Department travelers. BSC has agreed to provide this training. Official station designations are made in the best interest of the state and not the employee. We will review the official station that is questioned in this report for appropriateness.

Additionally, the managers of the Representative 1 and 3 will ensure the following detailed steps will be taken regarding travel oversight of all employees they manage:

- Staff will submit a weekly schedule and note the name of the facility, address, contact telephone number and the date they plan to do the site visit.
- All staff will carry with them a mileage/time log book and will log the date, time of departure and arrival to the facility and will do the same for all subsequent site visits within the same date. At the end of the day, staff will log the time they get home and mileage.
- For every site visit, staff will note the name of the facility, reason for the site visit and number of cases finished at the end of each visit.
- Every Monday, staff will supply supervisor with a copy of the car rental agreement. The supervisor will compare the mileage on the log book to the rental agreement.
- Periodically, the supervisor will confirm mileage with Google Maps to compare mileage reported by staff.
- Periodically, supervisor will verify with facility to make sure staff is at the facility they state they are at.

Recommendation #2:

Investigate the questionable travel and related expenses identified in this report and pursue recoveries, as appropriate.

Response #2:

The Department is in the process of determining whether recoveries of the travel expenses are appropriate.

Recommendation #3:

Review the pertinent time and attendance and travel records of Representative 1 and the Coordinator. Adjust leave accruals and/or compensation for these employees, as warranted.

Response #3:

The Department is in the process of determining whether adjustments are warranted.