



**Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller**

January 21, 2020

## **Former Controller Stole Nearly \$120,000 from a Sweetwater Assisted Living Facility**

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has resulted in the indictment of Mariam Renee Wells, the former Controller of Wood Presbyterian Home, Inc. in Sweetwater, Tennessee.

Wood Presbyterian Home is an 89-bed nonprofit assisted living facility that is funded by Medicare, Medicaid (TennCare), private insurance, and personal payments. The Controller is responsible for accounting records and financial reporting.

Comptroller investigators determined that Wells stole at least \$118,768 between March 1, 2014 and May 31, 2018. Wells was able to steal the money by keeping cash that she was supposed to deposit in the facility's bank account. Because Wells was also responsible for the reconciling bank statements with the accounting records, she was able to avoid detection for more than four years.



In May 2018, Wells became concerned that her theft was about to be discovered. She informed the facility's Executive Director that she had embezzled at least \$20,000. During that same meeting, she tendered a \$20,000 personal check and resigned from her position effective May 31, 2018. Wells later admitted to Comptroller investigators that she stole cash for her personal use and further admitted that the Comptroller's calculation of \$118,768 in stolen money was "probably correct."

In January 2020, the Monroe County Grand Jury indicted Mariam Renee Wells on one count of theft over \$60,000.

"It's vital that government entities, nonprofits, and other organizations separate financial responsibilities between more than one individual," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "In this case, the same person responsible for the accounting records was also involved in preparing cash for deposit, taking the cash to the bank, and performing bank reconciliations."

To view the investigative report, go to: <https://comptroller.tn.gov/office-functions/investigations/find.html>

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