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OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

2021-0015-INVI-P – Suspected Violations of the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) Administrative Leave Uses and Update to the Administration of Leave During COVID-19: Not Substantiated; Suspected Violation of the AOC Standards of Conduct Policy: Not Substantiated

On April 26, 2021, the AOC Office of Inspector General (OIG), received information that an employee falsely claimed exposure to the COVID-19 virus while on annual leave in an attempt to obtain two weeks of administrative leave under the guise of using it for quarantine purposes.

The OIG determined through testimonial evidence that no supervisor formally requested medical documentation or proof of notification of COVID-19 exposure from the employee. Upon request, the employee immediately provided the OIG with evidence as well as multiple witnesses, who corroborated the claim of being exposed to COVID-19 during the reported time frame.

The investigation also disclosed that as of the latest published guidance, The AOC Workplace and Leave Flexibilities Employee Toolkit, February 2021, there is no agency directive requiring employees who claim to have been exposed to COVID-19 to provide any documentation (formal or informal) notifying them of the exposure to the AOC.

Additionally, this specific employee's division mandates quarantine (on administrative leave) for employees who claim to have been exposed to COVID-19, then requires them to utilize their own sick leave if they report symptoms at any point during the quarantine time frame. This policy creates the potential for employees to be untruthful by not advising their supervisors of COVID-19 symptoms in an effort to conserve their own leave and could result in additional COVID-19 workplace exposures.

Final Management Action: The OIG did not substantiate the allegations. The case is closed.