

A Clay County woman has been charged with TennCare fraud in neighboring Pickett County for selling prescription drugs paid for by TennCare. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) today announced the arrest of Brenda Cherry, 41, after a joint investigation with the 15th Judicial Drug Task Force and the Macon County Sheriff's Office. She's has been charged with one count of TennCare fraud for using TennCare to obtain a prescription for the painkiller hydrocodone while concealing the fact she planned to sell a portion of the prescription.

"The help of local police and sheriff's officers has been critical in the success we've had identifying some of these drug fraud cases," Inspector General Deborah Y. Faulkner said. "Local police are clearly committed to eliminating prescription drug abuse in their communities, as we are intent on stopping abusers who support this lifestyle with TennCare."

If convicted of the TennCare fraud charge, Cherry could face a two year sentence. District Attorney Tom P. Thompson is prosecuting.

The OIG, which is separate from TennCare, began full operation in February 2005 and has investigated cases leading to over \$2.5 million paid in restitution and recoupment to TennCare, with a total estimated cost avoidance of over \$171 million for the TennCare program, according to latest figures. To date, over 1,000 people have been charged with TennCare fraud.

Through the OIG Cash for Tips Program established by the Legislature, Tennesseans can get cash rewards for TennCare fraud tips that lead to convictions. Anyone can report suspected TennCare fraud by calling 1-800-433-3982 toll-free from anywhere in Tennessee, or log on to [www.tn.gov/tnoig](http://www.tn.gov/tnoig) and follow the prompts that read "Report TennCare Fraud";