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PRESS RELEASE

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Former Caregiver Pleads Guilty to Neglect Charges

WASHINGTON – Latonia Shuler, 40, a former employee of Gentle Touch, a District of Columbia residential provider for persons with cognitive disabilities, has pled guilty to neglecting two persons in her care, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen, Jr. and District of Columbia Inspector General Charles J. Willoughby announced today.

Shuler, of Hyattsville, Md., pled guilty on Nov. 20, 2012, in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, to two misdemeanor counts of neglect. She was sentenced the same day by the Honorable Yvonne Williams. The judge sentenced Shuler to a total of 360 days in jail, but suspended the time on the condition that Shuler successfully completes a year of supervised probation.

Judge Williams also ordered Shuler to perform 30 hours of community service, participate in drug testing and treatment if appropriate, stay away from vulnerable adults, and pay \$100 toward the Victims of Violent Crime Compensation Act fund.

According to the government's evidence, on May 6, 2011, Shuler was employed as a direct care professional and trained medication employee, assigned to care for two women with developmental disabilities. She drove the women to an address in Washington, D.C. and left them unattended in the vehicle for several hours.

During that time, the women had no food, liquids, medication, or access to a bathroom. One of the women missed her anti-seizure medication. She experienced seizures in the early morning hours of May 7, 2011, and required hospital care.

In announcing the plea, U.S. Attorney Machen and Inspector General Willoughby praised the work of investigator Shante McGee, of the District of Columbia Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) for her investigation of the case. They also acknowledged the efforts of Assistant U.S. Attorney Damien Diggs and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Elaine Block of the MFCU, who jointly prosecuted the case.