

# California Correctional Health Care Services and Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

## Improper Travel Expenses (Case I2009-0689)

### REPORT NUMBER I2012-1, CHAPTER 5, ISSUED DECEMBER 2012

This report concludes that a manager with California Correctional Health Care Services (Correctional Health Services) improperly authorized Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (Corrections) employees to use rental cars and receive mileage reimbursements for their commutes. The manager also improperly authorized these employees to receive reimbursements for expenses they incurred near their homes and headquarters and for which Corrections inappropriately approved payment. As a result, the State paid a total of 23 employees \$55,053 in travel benefits to which the employees were not entitled.

In the report, the California State Auditor (state auditor) made the following recommendations to Correctional Health Services and Corrections. The state auditor's determination regarding the current status of recommendations is based on the responses provided to the state auditor as of December 2012.

#### **Recommendation 1—See pages 31 through 34 of the investigative report for information on the related finding.**

Correctional Health Services should provide training to the manager and supervisors involved in the claim authorization process regarding the state rules applicable to claiming travel expenses.

#### ***Correctional Health Services' Action: Pending.***

Correctional Health Services reported that it was considering developing a "lesson plan" regarding state travel laws and regulations.

#### **Recommendation 2—See pages 31 through 34 of the investigative report for information on the related finding.**

Correctional Health Services should discontinue reimbursing employees for expenses claimed in violation of state regulations.

#### ***Correctional Health Services' Action: Partially implemented.***

Correctional Health Services reported that to help detect any improper reimbursements and to ensure compliance with policies and procedures, it would initiate spot reviews of travel claims.

#### **Recommendation 3—See page 35 of the investigative report for information on the related finding.**

Corrections should provide training to its accounting staff regarding state regulations and the applicable collective bargaining agreements that relate to travel reimbursements.

#### ***Corrections' Action: Fully implemented.***

Corrections reported that it consolidated its travel functions to a regional office composed of well-trained staff. It also stated that all new regional office employees now receive training and are provided with all pertinent policies and training manuals to perform their duties effectively.

**Recommendation 4—See page 35 of the investigative report for information on the related finding.**

Corrections should develop procedures to ensure that it provides accurate, clear responses when employees seek clarification of state travel rules.

***Corrections' Action: Fully implemented.***

Corrections reported that it allows employees to obtain answers to travel-related questions by contacting its help desk, which is staffed and supervised by employees who have received extensive training regarding travel procedures to ensure that the information provided is clear and accurate.