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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Welfare fraud, theft charges filed

A registered sex offender is accused of wrongfully obtaining public assistance by providing false information to the St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services Department.

Odis Trehorn Jones, 36, of Duluth, who is also known by the middle name "Trehern," is charged in State District Court with theft by swindle and two counts of wrongfully obtaining food and medical support.

In applying for public assistance in March of last year, Jones reported that he was homeless and staying with friends in Minnesota. Based on the information he provided he was approved to receive food support through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, as well as medical assistance.

The St. Louis County Attorney's Office received a referral in August alleging that Jones was a resident of Wisconsin while he was receiving public assistance from Minnesota. The defendant is also a registered sex offender in Wisconsin.

Investigators in the county attorney's office learned that in March of last year Jones reported to his Wisconsin probation officer that he had moved to an apartment in Superior. A week later he completed a sex offender registration form confirming his Superior address. In July, investigators say he called his probation officer and reported moving to another Superior address. Meanwhile, he was reporting to St. Louis County that he was living in Minnesota.

In June, Jones allegedly told a St. Louis County financial worker that he was not eligible for cash assistance in Wisconsin so he applied for benefits in Minnesota. Because he was not living in Minnesota from March through June 2013, the

defendant was not entitled to receive any of the \$2,586 in medical assistance and \$729 in food support that he received during that time.

In a separate case filed in St. Louis County last year, Jones is charged with eight controlled substance crimes and for wrongfully obtaining assistance – aids/abets buying or disposing property without consent. That case is scheduled for trial on July 22.

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