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Woman allegedly stole \$50,000 from great-aunt, Janet Webster, 91, of Clio

By Laura Angus | Flint Journal

January 06, 2010, 5:47PM

CLIO, Michigan — After a 91-year-old Clio woman nearly was evicted from a nursing home, investigators discovered her great-niece allegedly stole \$50,000 from the nonagenarian from 2008 to 2009.

Tamara A. Altvater, 52, has been accused by authorities of taking the funds from her great-aunt, Janet E. Webster, while not paying expenses for her care, said Genesee County Sheriff Robert Pickell.

Altvater had control of Webster's finances for at least three years, and authorities say she wrote checks to herself from her aunt's bank account.

"We learned from our investigation that Tamara Altvater used the money to buy things for herself," Pickell said

When Webster's monthly bill at her nursing home fell three months behind, Altvater told employees that her great-aunt was "out of money," Pickell said. Employees alerted the elder abuse task force about their suspicions, he said.

Diane Nims, director of Elder Abuse and Exploitation Prevention for the task force, said investigators often discover embezzlement when bills for the seniors go unpaid.

"What happens is the client is booted out of the retirement home at no fault of their own," Nims said.

Pickell said Webster remains in the nursing home with support from task force social workers.

According to court documents, Altvater is charged with three counts of embezzling from a vulnerable adult.

A hearing is scheduled for Jan. 13. She has requested a court-appointed attorney, but there wasn't one on file Wednesday.

Pickell said the elder abuse task force is offering training for senior groups, senior centers and anyone else interested in learning about senior abuse, how to report it and services available for Genesee County seniors.

There are no set dates for training, and Pickell said groups interested in hosting a training event should call to schedule an event.

For help, to report abuse or to sign up for a training session, call (810) 762-4022.

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