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**FORMER POSTAL SERVICE EMPLOYEE SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR MAKING  
FALSE STATEMENTS TO OBTAIN FEDERAL DISABILITY BENEFITS**

*Operated A Salon and Fitness Center While Claiming to Be Disabled*

**Greenbelt**, Maryland - Chief U.S. District Judge Deborah K. Chasanow sentenced Darlene M. Altvater, age 48, of Mechanicsville, Maryland, late yesterday to five months in prison, followed by five months home detention and three years of supervised release, for two counts of making false statements to obtain federal disability benefits. Chief Judge Chasanow also ordered Altvater to pay restitution, with the exact amount still to be determined.

The sentence was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein; Special Agent in Charge Paul Bowman of the U.S. Postal Service, Office of Inspector General; and Special Agent in Charge Michael S. Barcus, U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General, Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations

According to the evidence presented at her five day trial, Darlene Altvater was employed by the U.S. Postal Service as a rural carrier at the Mechanicsville Post Office in St. Mary's County, Maryland. After an on-the-job injury to her head and neck, Altvater began receiving federal workers' compensation benefits in 2001. The evidence showed that from January 2005 through December 2011, while she continued to receive worker's compensation benefits based on her disability, Altvater operated a salon, day spa and fitness center, first in Leonardown, Maryland and later in California, Maryland, under the names LadySlender LLC, Creative Touch Salon and Spa, and California Fitness LLC.

Although Altvater filed forms with the USPS and the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workers' Compensation Programs claiming that she was unable to work due to her disability, witnesses testified that Altvater reported to the salon on a regular basis, performing physical acts, including demonstrating the use of the fitness equipment, performing pedicures and giving massages.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein praised the U.S. Postal Service, Office of Inspector General and U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General, Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations for their work in the investigation. Mr. Rosenstein thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Hollis R. Weisman and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Ann O'Brien, assigned from the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division, who prosecuted the case.