



# STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW

## ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER

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## HEALTH COMMISSIONER CONSTITUTES 62% OF ALL MANAGERIAL CONFIDENTIAL COVID OVERTIME

*Dr. Gale Burstein racks up almost \$87,000 in COVID related overtime for the first nine months of the year*

**(BUFFALO)** – The Office of Erie County Comptroller completed a report on political patronage appointees (Managerial Confidential employees) and the amount of COVID-19 related overtime they earned for the first nine months of 2021. Data shows Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein racked up the most extra cash for the first three quarters of the fiscal year, raking in approximately \$86,848 in COVID overtime for working an additional 585 hours; this is in addition to her 2021 paid salary of \$209,044.

The almost \$87,000 in COVID related overtime constitutes 62% of the combined overtime earned by all political patronage employees. The Comptroller's Office report shows that while Dr. Gale Burstein alone earned exactly \$86,848 in COVID related overtime, all Managerial Confidential employees that report directly to Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz hauled in approximately \$139,086 for 1,339 overtime hours.

"Dr. Gale Burstein made twice as much in overtime in nine months than what most hard-working, blue-collar employees earn in an entire year. She's fattening up her taxpayer funded pension while lying about mask restrictions, trying to block kids from getting breaks in schools. The Health Commissioner tramples on the rights of parents, oversteps professional boundaries, punishes children, all the while forcing taxpayers to inflate her salary with overtime she shouldn't be getting in the first place," said Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw Jr.

The overtime amount would be even higher for Dr. Burstein if Erie County didn't change its policy on collecting comp time before overtime can be paid out. Erie County employees, including Dr. Gale Burstein, must first rack up 200 hours of comp time before overtime can be paid. That won't stop the Health Commissioner or other county employees from simply cashing in the accumulated comp time at the end of the year, however.

Combining union employees and political patronage employees, Erie County government paid out a total of \$16,183,793 (345,950 hours) for all workers for the first nine months of the year.

In 2020, Dr. Burstein collected \$183,414.00 in overtime in addition to her salary of over \$200,000+.

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