

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]
Clinton Township, MI 48038

Reg. No: 2011-45462

[REDACTED]
Macomb County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: C. Adam Purnell

HEARING DECISION

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and MCL 400.37 upon the DHS client's (also referred to as "Claimant") request for a hearing received on July 28, 2011. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on August 30, 2011. Claimant personally appeared and provided testimony.

ISSUE

Whether the department properly determined Claimant's Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits and Claimant's Medical Assistance (MA) deductible?

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the competent, material and substantial evidence on the whole record, finds as material fact:

1. Claimant applied for FAP and MA on July 22, 2011. (Hearing Summary).
2. Claimant's group size is 2 (two).
3. Claimant had monthly unearned income from pension and RSDI [REDACTED] and his spouse had monthly unearned income [REDACTED] from RSDI. (Department Exhibits 11-16).
4. On July 22, 2011, the department mailed Claimant a Notice of Case Action (DHS-1605) denying FAP benefits due to excess income and informing him that his MA Group 2 carries a deductible of [REDACTED] (Department Exhibits 1-4).
5. Claimant submitted a hearing request on July 28, 2011, challenging the denial of his FAP application as well as the MA deductible. (Request for a Hearing).

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The regulations governing the hearing and appeal process for applicants and recipients of public assistance in Michigan are found in the Michigan Administrative Code, MAC R 400.901-400.951. An opportunity for a hearing shall be granted to an applicant who requests a hearing because his claim for assistance is denied. MAC R 400.903(1).

Clients have the right to contest a department decision affecting eligibility or benefit levels whenever it is believed that the decision is incorrect. BAM 600. The department will provide an administrative hearing to review the decision and determine the appropriateness. BAM 600.

The Food Assistance Program (FAP) (formerly known as the Food Stamp (FS) program) is established by the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, and is implemented by the federal regulations contained in Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The Department of Human Services (DHS or department) administers the FAP program pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and MAC R 400.3001-3015. The department's policies are found in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) and the Bridges Reference Manual (BRM).

For FAP purposes, all earned and unearned income available to Claimant is countable. Earned income means income received from another person or organization or from self-employment for duties that were performed for compensation or profit. Unearned income means all income that is not earned, including but not limited to funds received from the Family Independence Program (FIP), State Disability Assistance (SDA), Child Development and Care (CDC), Medicaid (MA), Social Security Benefits (RSDI/SSI), Veterans Administration (VA), Unemployment Compensation Benefits (UCB), Adult Medical Program (AMP), alimony, and child support payments. The amount counted may be more than the client actually receives because the gross amount is used prior to any deductions. BEM 500.

The department determines a client's eligibility for program benefits based on the client's actual income and/or prospective income. Actual income is income that was already received. Prospective income is income not yet received but expected. Prospective budgeting is the best estimate of the client's future income. BEM 505.

Claimant was receiving monthly unearned income in the amount of [REDACTED] at the time relevant to this matter. The standard deduction of [REDACTED] was subtracted from Claimant's countable income as well as a medical deduction of [REDACTED] leaving an adjusted gross income of [REDACTED]

Federal regulations at 7 CF 273.10 provide standards for income and the amount of household benefits. In accordance with the federal regulations, the department has prepared income and issuance tables which can be found at RFT 260. This issuance table provides that a household size of 2 (two) with net income of [REDACTED] is not entitled to FAP benefits. Therefore, the department's FAP eligibility determination was correct based on Claimant's household unearned income (pension and social security).

The Medical Assistance (MA) program is established by Title XIX of the Social Security Act and is implemented by Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The Department of Human Services (DHS or department) administers the MA program pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and MCL 400.105. Department policies are found in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) and the Bridges Reference Manual (BRM).

The goal of the Medicaid program is to ensure that essential health care services are made available to those who otherwise could not afford them. Medicaid is also known as Medical Assistance (MA). The Medicaid program is comprised of several sub-programs or categories. One category is FIP recipients. Another category is SSI recipients. There are several other categories for persons not receiving FIP or SSI. However, the eligibility factors for these categories are based on (related to) the eligibility factors in either the FIP or SSI program. Therefore, these categories are referred to as either FIP-related or SSI-related.

To receive Medicaid under an SSI-related category, the person must be aged (65 or older), blind, disabled, entitled to Medicare or formerly blind or disabled. Families with dependent children, caretaker relatives of dependent children, persons under age 21 and pregnant, or recently pregnant women, receive Medicaid under FIP-related categories.

Clients may qualify under more than one Medicaid category. Federal law gives them the right to the most beneficial category. The most beneficial category is the one that results in eligibility or the least amount of excess income. BEM 105. The State of Michigan has set guidelines for income, which determine if a Medicaid group is eligible. Income eligibility exists for the calendar month tested when there is no excess income, or allowable medical expenses equal or exceed the excess income (under the Deductible Guidelines). BEM 545.

Net income (countable income minus allowable income deductions) must be at or below a certain income limit for eligibility to exist. BEM 105. Income eligibility exists when net income does not exceed the Group 2 needs in BEM 544. BEM 166. The protected income level is a set allowance for non-medical need items such as shelter, food and incidental expenses. RFT 240 lists the Group 2 Medicaid protected income levels based on shelter area and fiscal group size. BEM 544. An eligible Medicaid group (Group 2 MA) has income the same as or less than the "protected income level" as set forth in the policy contained in the Reference Table (RFT). An individual or Medicaid group whose income is in excess of the monthly protected income level is ineligible to receive Medicaid.

However, a Medicaid group may become eligible for assistance under the deductible program. The deductible program is a process, which allows a client with excess income to be eligible for Medicaid, if sufficient allowable medical expenses are incurred. Each calendar month is a separate deductible period. The fiscal group's monthly excess income is called the deductible amount. Meeting a deductible means reporting and verifying allowable medical expenses that equal or exceed the deductible amount for the calendar month. The Medicaid group must report expenses by the last day of

the third month following the month it wants medical coverage. BEM 545; 42 CFR 435.831.

In this case, Claimant's protected income level is [REDACTED] (See RFT 240 for Group Size of 2 (two) and County Shelter Area VI - Montcalm County) and Claimant's countable net income is [REDACTED]. Subtracting the protected income level of [REDACTED] from Claimant's countable net income of [REDACTED] results in Claimant's monthly deductible being [REDACTED].

This Administrative Law Judge finds that the department properly determined Claimant's Medicaid eligibility. Claimant's pension and the RSDI from both he and his spouse bring them over the eligibility limit for full coverage Medicaid based on the increased income. The department was then required to determine if Claimant was eligible for Medicaid under any other program. Even though Claimant's net income is in excess of the allowable limits, the department found he is still eligible for Medicaid under the deductible program. As a result, the department properly determined Claimant's Medicaid eligibility.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the department properly determined Claimant's Medicaid deductible and FAP benefits.

The department's MA deductible and FAP determinations are AFFIRMED.

It is SO ORDERED.

/s/

C. Adam Purnell
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: 9/8/11

Date Mailed: 9/8/11

NOTICE: Administrative Hearings may order a rehearing or reconsideration on either its own motion or at the request of a party within 30 days of the mailing date of this Decision and Order. Administrative Hearings will not order a rehearing or reconsideration on the Department's motion where the final decision cannot be implemented within 60 days of the filing of the original request.

The Claimant may appeal the Decision and Order to Circuit Court within 30 days of the receipt of the Decision and Order or, if a timely request for rehearing was made, within 30 days of the receipt date of the rehearing decision.

CAP/ds

