

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

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No.: 201412282
Issue No.: 2003
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: December 19, 2013
County: Jackson

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: C. Adam Purnell

HEARING DECISION

Following Claimant's request for a hearing, this matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and 400.37; 7 CFR 273.15 to 273.18; 42 CFR 431.200 to 431.250; 45 CFR 99.1 to 99.33; and 45 CFR 205.10. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on December 19, 2013, from Lansing, Michigan. Claimant personally appeared and provided testimony. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (Assistance Payments Supervisor).

ISSUE

Did the Department properly close Claimant's Medical Assistance (MA) case due to failure to return a redetermination form?

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. Claimant was active for MA-Other Healthy Kids (OHK).
2. On September 16, 2013, the Department mailed Claimant a Healthy Kids Redetermination Notice (DHS-0034) with a due date of October 1, 2013.
3. On October 31, 2013, the Department mailed Claimant a Notice of Case Action (DHS-1605) which closed Claimant's MA-OHK case for 2 of his children effective November 1, 2013. The reason for closure was due to failure to return the redetermination packet.
4. Claimant requested a hearing to challenge the closure on November 8, 2013.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Department policies are contained in the Department of Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), Department of Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), Department of Human Services Reference Tables Manual (RFT), and Department of Human Services Emergency Relief Manual (ERM).

The Medical Assistance (MA) program is established by the Title XIX of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 1396-1396w-5, and is implemented by 42 CFR 400.200 to 1008.59. The Department of Human Services (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers the MA program pursuant to MCL 400.10 and MCL 400.105.

The Department must periodically redetermine an individual's eligibility for active programs. BAM 210. The redetermination process includes thorough review of all eligibility factors. BAM 210. Redetermination, semi-annual and mid-certification forms are often used to redetermine eligibility of active programs. BAM 210. A complete redetermination is required at least every 12 months. BAM 210. However, the client must complete a DHS-1171, Assistance Application, to request a program that is not active at the time of redetermination. BAM 210. Local offices must assist clients who need and request help to complete applications, forms and obtain verifications; see BAM 130, Obtaining Verification. BAM 210.

For purposes of MA, benefits stop at the end of the benefit period unless a redetermination is completed and a new benefit period is certified. BAM 210. Also, the redetermination month is 12 months from the date the most recent complete application was submitted. BAM 210.

For MA, verifications are due the same date as the redetermination/review interview. BAM 210. When an interview is not required, verifications are due the date the packet is due. BAM 210. Bridges allows clients a full 10 calendar days from the date the verification is requested (date of request is not counted) to provide all documents and information. If the 10th day falls on a weekend or holiday, the verification would not be due until the next business day. BAM 210.

If the redetermination packet is not logged in by the negative action cutoff date of the redetermination month, Bridges generates a DHS-1605, Notice of Case Action, and automatically closes the EDG. BAM 210.

Here, the Department contends that Claimant failed to return a redetermination packet which resulted in the closure of his MA-OHK case. Claimant, on the other hand, contends that he did not receive a copy of the redetermination form in the mail.

Testimony and other evidence must be weighed and considered according to its reasonableness. *Gardiner v Courtright*, 165 Mich 54, 62; 130 NW 322 (1911); *Dep't of Community Health v Risch*, 274 Mich App 365, 372; 733 NW2d 403 (2007). The weight

and credibility of this evidence is generally for the fact-finder to determine. *Dep't of Community Health*, 274 Mich App at 372; *People v Terry*, 224 Mich App 447, 452; 569 NW2d 641 (1997). Moreover, it is for the fact-finder to gauge the demeanor and veracity of the witnesses who appear before him, as best he is able. See, e.g., *Caldwell v Fox*, 394 Mich 401, 407; 231 NW2d 46 (1975); *Zeeland Farm Services, Inc v JBL Enterprises, Inc*, 219 Mich App 190, 195; 555 NW2d 733 (1996).

This Administrative Law Judge has carefully considered and weighed the testimony and other evidence in the record. Because Claimant argues that he did not receive a copy of the redetermination packet in the mail, this Administrative Law Judge must determine whether the redetermination was properly sent and received.

Michigan adopts the mailbox rule which is a presumption under the common-law that letters have been received after being placed in the mail in the due course of business. *Good v Detroit Automobile Inter-Insurance Exchange*, 67 Mich App 270 (1976). In other words, the proper mailing and addressing of a letter creates a presumption of receipt but that presumption may be rebutted by evidence. *Stacey v Sankovich*, 19 Mich App 638 (1969); *Good v Detroit Automobile Inter-Insurance Exchange*, 67 Mich App 270 (1976). Under the mailbox rule, evidence of business custom or usage is allowed to establish the fact of mailing without further testimony by an employee of compliance with the custom. *Good, supra*. Such evidence is admissible without further evidence from the records custodian that a particular letter was actually mailed. *Good supra* at 275. "Moreover, the fact that a letter was mailed with a return address but was not returned lends strength to the presumption that the letter was received." *Id* at 276. The challenging party may rebut the presumption that the letter was received by presenting evidence to the contrary. See *id*.

The department has produced sufficient evidence of its business custom with respect to addressing and mailing, the mere execution of the redetermination form in the usual course of business rebuttably presumes subsequent receipt by the addressee. *Good v Detroit Automobile Inter-Insurance Exchange*, 67 Mich App 270 (1976). Moreover, Claimant has not come forward with sufficient evidence to rebut the presumption. In fact, Claimant suggested that the Department may have properly sent the redetermination notice and that it may have been lost or misplaced by someone in his household.

Based on the competent, material, and substantial evidence presented during the hearing, this Administrative Law Judge finds that the Department acted properly when it closed Claimant's MA-OHK case for failure to return the redetermination form.

The Administrative Law Judge, based on the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, if any, finds that the Department acted in accordance with Department policy.

DECISION AND ORDER

Accordingly, the Department's decision is **AFFIRMED**.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

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

Date Signed: December 19, 2013

Date Mailed: December 20, 2013

NOTICE OF APPEAL: 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 or Reconsideration was made, within 30 days of the receipt date of the Decision and Order of Reconsideration or Rehearing Decision.

Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS) 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. MAHS will not order a rehearing or reconsideration on the Department's motion where the final decision cannot be implemented within 90 days of the filing of the original request (60 days for FAP cases).

A Request for Rehearing or Reconsideration may be granted when one of the following exists:

- Newly discovered evidence that existed at the time of the original hearing that could affect the outcome of the original hearing decision;
- Misapplication of manual policy or law in the hearing decision which led to a wrong conclusion;
- Typographical, mathematical or other obvious error in the hearing decision that affects the rights of the client;
- Failure of the ALJ to address in the hearing decision relevant issues raised in the hearing request.

The Department, AHR or the claimant must specify all reasons for the request. MAHS will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration. A request must be *received* in MAHS within 30 days of the date the hearing decision is mailed.

The written request must be faxed to (517) 335-6088 and be labeled as follows:

Attention: MAHS Rehearing/Reconsideration Request

201412282/CAP

If submitted by mail, the written request must be addressed as follows:

Michigan Administrative Hearings
Reconsideration/Rehearing Request
P.O. Box 30639
Lansing, Michigan 48909-07322

CAP/aca

cc:

