

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 201421117
Issue No.: [REDACTED]
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: February 4, 2014
County: Macomb

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Gary F. Heisler

HEARING DECISION

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and MCL 400.37 following Claimant's request for a hearing. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on February 4, 2014. Claimant appeared and testified. Participants from the Department included FIS [REDACTED].

ISSUE

Did the Department properly sanction Claimant's Family Independence Program (FIP) for failure to participate in employment and/or self-sufficiency related activities?

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 an ongoing recipient of Family Independence Program (FIP) benefits.
- (2) On October 1, 2013, Claimant was sent a Partnership, Accountability, Training, Hope (PATH) Appointment Notice (DHS-4785 form). The notice stated that Claimant was required to attend Partnership, Accountability, Training, Hope (PATH) by October 16, 2013.
- (3) On October 21, 2013, Claimant had not attended PATH. Claimant was sent a Notice of Non-Compliance (DHS-2444) which scheduled a meeting for October 31, 2013. Claimant was also sent a Notice of Case Action (DHS-1605) stating that the Family Independence Program (FIP) and Food Assistance Program (FAP) would be sanctioned.

- (4) On October 31, 2013, Claimant did not attend the scheduled meeting. The Department determined there was no good cause for Claimant's failure to participate in employment and/or self-sufficiency related activities.
- (5) On November 15, 2013, Claimant submitted an undated note from Michigan Neurology Associates which stated she could return to work on May 1, 2014. The note was signed by a [REDACTED]. The letterhead for the Michigan Neurology Associates lists 13 Doctors. [REDACTED] MD is not listed.
- (6) On January 9, 2014, Claimant submitted a request for hearing.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Family Independence Program (FIP) was established pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Public Law 104-193, 42 USC 601, *et seq.* The Department (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FIP pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and 1997 AACRS R 400.3101-3131. FIP replaced the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program effective October 1, 1996.

Department policy provides the following guidance for case workers. The Department's policies are available on the internet through the Department's website.

BEM 233A FAILURE TO MEET EMPLOYMENT AND/OR SELF-SUFFICIENCY RELATED REQUIREMENTS: FIP

DEPARTMENT PHILOSOPHY FIP

DHS requires clients to participate in employment and self-sufficiency-related activities and to accept employment when offered. The focus is to assist clients in removing barriers so they can participate in activities which lead to self-sufficiency. However, there are consequences for a client who refuses to participate, without good cause.

The goal of the FIP penalty policy is to obtain client compliance with appropriate work and/or self-sufficiency related assignments and to ensure that barriers to such compliance have been identified and removed. The goal is to bring the client into compliance.

DEPARTMENT POLICY FIP

A Work Eligible Individual (WEI) and non-WEIs (except ineligible grantees, clients deferred for lack of child care, and disqualified aliens), see BEM 228, who fails, without good cause, to participate in employment or self-sufficiency-related activities, must be penalized. Depending on the case situation, penalties include the following:

- Delay in eligibility at application.
- Ineligibility (denial or termination of FIP with no minimum penalty period).
- Case closure for a minimum of three months for the first episode of noncompliance, six months for the second episode of noncompliance and lifetime closure for the third episode of noncompliance.

See BEM 233B for the Food Assistance Program (FAP) policy when the FIP penalty is closure.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH EMPLOYMENT AND/OR SELF-SUFFICIENCY RELATED ACTIVITIES

As a condition of eligibility, all WEIs and non-WEIs must work or engage in employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activities.

Noncompliance of applicants, recipients, or member adds means doing **any** of the following **without** good cause:

Failure to complete a FAST or FSSP results in closure due to failure to provide requested verification. Clients can reapply at any time.

- Failing or refusing to:
 - Appear and participate with Partnership, Accountability, Training, Hope (PATH) or other employment service provider.
 - Complete a Family Automated Screening Tool (FAST), as assigned as the first step in the FSSP process.
 - Develop a Family Self-Sufficiency Plan (FSSP).
 - Comply with activities assigned on the FSSP.
 - Provide legitimate documentation of work participation.
 - Appear for a scheduled appointment or meeting related to assigned activities.

- Participate in employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activities.
- Participate in required activity.
- Accept a job referral.
- Complete a job application.
- Appear for a job interview (see the exception below).
- Stating orally or in writing a definite intent not to comply with program requirements.
- Threatening, physically abusing or otherwise behaving disruptively toward anyone conducting or participating in an employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activity.
- Refusing employment support services if the refusal prevents participation in an employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activity.

GOOD CAUSE FOR NONCOMPLIANCE

Good cause is a valid reason for noncompliance with employment and/or self-sufficiency related activities that are based on factors that are beyond the control of the noncompliant person. A claim of good cause must be verified and documented for member adds and recipients.

Claimant does not dispute her failure to attend PATH. Claimant was previously deferred from participation for medical reasons. Claimant and FIS [REDACTED] both testified that Claimant called prior to the last day for her to attend. Claimant and FIS [REDACTED] both testified that Claimant indicated she was going to submit medical verification for another deferral and stated the verification might be late.

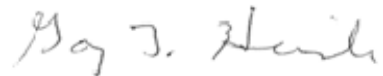
During this hearing Claimant provided conflicting testimony on when she started seeing [REDACTED]. There is no dispute that no documentation or verifications were submitted until well after the dates Claimant was required to attend PATH and the triage meeting. The note Claimant submitted from [REDACTED] is insufficient to establish good cause. First, it does not have any start dates on it, Second, Claimant's testimony on when she started seeing [REDACTED] is not credible because she gave different and conflicting testimony on the issue. Third, [REDACTED] is not listed on the letterhead of the note Claimant submitted.

Evidence presented at the hearing is not sufficient to establish that Claimant had good cause in accordance with Department policy.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, finds that the Department properly sanctioned Claimant's Family Independence Program (FIP) for failure to participate in employment and/or self-sufficiency related activities.

It is ORDERED that the actions of the Department of Human Services, in this matter, are **UPHELD**.



Gary F. Heisler
Administrative Law Judge
For Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: 02/06/2014

Date Mailed: 02/07/2014

NOTICE OF APPEAL: 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).

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.

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.

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

Attention: MAHS Rehearing/Reconsideration Request

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

GFH/sw

cc:

