

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 14-009510
Issue No.: 1008
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: September 11, 2014
County: IOSCO

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Darryl Johnson

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 three-way telephone hearing was held on September 11, 2014, from Lansing, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included Claimant. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included Case Manager [REDACTED].

ISSUE

Did the Department properly close Claimant's Family Independence Program (FIP) benefits?

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 on-going FIP recipient.
2. Claimant's case was submitted to the Medical Review Team (MRT) for review and she was found work-ready with limitations.
3. On June 20, 2014, the Department mailed a letter to Claimant, along with the MRT assessment, informing her that she was to attend a PATH meeting on July 1, 2014. (Exhibit 1 Page D1).
4. Claimant did not attend the PATH orientation.
5. A Notice of Case Action (NCA) and Notice of Noncompliance were mailed to Claimant on July 9, 2014, informing her that her FIP would be closed effective August 1, 2014, and scheduling her for a triage meeting on July 17, 2014, at 2:00 p.m. (Exhibit 1 Pages F-1, 2 and H-1-5.)

6. Claimant did not show for the triage appointment, and the Department found she had not shown good cause for her noncompliance.
7. On August 4, 2014, the Department received Claimant's hearing request.

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 Family Independence Program (FIP) was established pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-193, and 42 USC 601 to 679c. The Department (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FIP pursuant to 45 CFR 233-260, MCL 400.10, the Social Welfare Act, MCL 400.1-.119b, and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3101 to .3131.

"Clients must cooperate with the local office in determining initial and ongoing eligibility. This includes completion of necessary forms; see Refusal to Cooperate Penalties in this item. Clients must completely and truthfully answer all questions on forms and in interviews." BAM 105.

The PATH program requirements including education and training opportunities are found in BEM 229. Failure by a client to participate fully in assigned activities while the FIP application is pending will result in denial of FIP benefits. A Work Eligible Individual (WEI) who refuses, without good cause, to participate in assigned employment and/or other self-sufficiency related activities is subject to penalties. If the client does not return the activity log by the due date, it is treated as a noncompliance; see BEM 233A. When a FAP or FIP recipient is non-compliant, BEM 233B establishes several consequences.

If a participant is active FIP and FAP at the time of FIP noncompliance, determination of FAP good cause is based on the FIP good cause reasons outlined in BEM 233A. For the FAP determination, if the client does not meet one of the FIP good cause reasons, determine the FAP disqualification based on FIP deferral criteria only as outlined in BEM 230A, or the FAP deferral reason of care of a child under 6 or education. No other deferral reasons apply for participants active FIP and FAP. Determine good cause during triage appointment/phone conference and prior to the negative action period. Good cause must be provided prior to the end of the negative action period.

"Determine good cause during triage and prior to the negative action effective date. Good cause must be verified and provided prior to the end of the negative action period and can be based on information already on file with the DHS or PATH." BEM 233A p 11 (7/1/13).

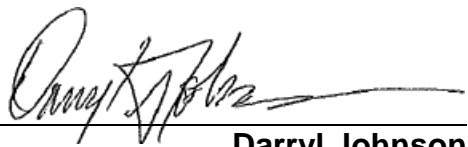
Per BEM 233A, "good cause for non-compliance" is based on factors beyond control of the client. Some circumstances that are considered "good cause" are: working 40 hours or more; client is unfit for a particular job; illness or injury; lack of child care; lack of transportation; unplanned events; long commute. "If it is determined during triage the client has good cause, and good cause issues have been resolved, send the client back to PATH."

Claimant testified that she called DHS and told them she would not be participating with PATH because she takes so many prescription drugs to pass a drug test that she would never be hired for a job. She also testified that she has no transportation and no one to watch her kids. Claimant did not attend the triage. Without participating in triage, she could not establish good cause for not complying with the PATH program. Perhaps, had she attended orientation she would have found services and employment alternatives available through PATH that would not require her to take a drug test. Perhaps, had she attended the triage, she could have convinced the Department that she had good cause for not participating. Perhaps, had she called the Department before her PATH appointment and explained that she lacked transportation and childcare, they could have helped her find resources that would have resolved those impediments. As it is, she chose to just tell the Department that she would not participate in PATH, and then she chose not to participate in triage. Those choices have caused her to lose her FIP benefits and to be ineligible for a minimum of three months. If she makes these same choices in the future, she is subject to a six-month penalty period, and then a lifetime penalty in the Family Independence Program.

Claimant has presented a case that evokes sympathy, but sympathy cannot play a part in this decision. 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 when it determined that Claimant failed to comply with the training requirements, and that she failed to show good cause for her non-compliance.

DECISION AND ORDER

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



Darryl Johnson
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: **9/15/2014**

Date Mailed: **9/15/2014**

DTJ / jaf

NOTICE OF APPEAL: A party may appeal this Hearing Decision in the circuit court in the county in which he/she resides, or the circuit court in Ingham County, within 30 days of the receipt date.

A party may request a rehearing or reconsideration of this Hearing Decision from the Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS) within 30 days of the mailing date of this Hearing Decision, or MAHS may order a rehearing or reconsideration on its own motion.

MAHS may grant a party's Request for Rehearing or Reconsideration 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 party requesting a rehearing or reconsideration 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 this Hearing Decision is mailed.

A written request may be faxed or mailed to MAHS. If submitted by fax, 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

cc:

