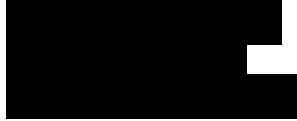



**STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**


IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No.: 14-004399
Issue No.: 3005
Case No.: 
Hearing Date: September 25, 2014
County: WAYNE-DISTRICT 57

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Susan Burke

HEARING DECISION FOR INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION

Upon the request for a hearing by the Department of Human Services (Department), this matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9, and in accordance with Titles 7, 42 and 45 of the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR), particularly 7 CFR 273.16, and with Mich Admin Code, R 400.3130 and R 400.3178. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on September 25, 2014 from Detroit, Michigan. The Department was represented by , Regulation Agent of the Office of Inspector General (OIG).


Respondent did not appear at the hearing and it was held in Respondent's absence pursuant to 7 CFR 273.16(e), Mich Admin Code R 400.3130(5), or Mich Admin Code R 400.3178(5).

ISSUES

1. Did Respondent receive an overissuance (OI) of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits that the Department is entitled to recoup?
2. Did the Department prove by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV)?
3. Should Respondent be disqualified from receiving FAP 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. The Department's OIG filed a hearing request on , to establish an OI of benefits received by Respondent as a result of Respondent having allegedly committed an IPV.

2. The OIG requested that Respondent be disqualified from receiving program benefits.
3. Respondent's mother was a recipient of FAP benefits issued by the Department.
4. Respondent was a recipient of FAP benefits issued by the Department.
5. Respondent had a FAP authorized representative on her FAP case.
6. Respondent's mother's Bridge card was used after the death of Respondent's mother.

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), and Department of Human Services Reference Tables Manual (RFT). Prior to August 1, 2008, Department policies were contained in the Department of Human Services Program Administrative Manuals (PAM), Department of Human Services Program Eligibility Manual (PEM), and Department of Human Services Reference Schedules Manual (RFS).

The Food Assistance Program (FAP) [formerly known as the Food Stamp program] is established by the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, 7 USC 2011 to 2036a and is implemented by the federal regulations contained in 7 CFR 271.1 to 285.5. The Department (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FAP pursuant to MCL 400.10 and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3001 to .3015.

The Department's OIG requests IPV hearings for the following cases:

- FAP trafficking OIs that are not forwarded to the prosecutor,
- prosecution of welfare fraud or FAP trafficking is declined by the prosecutor for a reason other than lack of evidence, and
 - the total OI amount for the FIP, SDA, CDC, MA and FAP programs is \$1000 or more, or
 - the total OI amount is less than \$1000, **and**
 - the group has a previous IPV, or
 - the alleged IPV involves FAP trafficking, or
 - the alleged fraud involves concurrent receipt of assistance (see BEM 222), or
 - the alleged fraud is committed by a state/government employee.

BAM 720 (7/1/2013), p. 12

Intentional Program Violation

Suspected IPV means an OI exists for which all three of the following conditions exist:

- The client intentionally failed to report information **or** intentionally gave incomplete or inaccurate information needed to make a correct benefit determination, and
- The client was clearly and correctly instructed regarding his or her reporting responsibilities, and
- The client has no apparent physical or mental impairment that limits his or her understanding or ability to fulfill reporting responsibilities.

BAM 720, p. 1.

An IPV is also suspected for a client who is alleged to have trafficked FAP benefits. BAM 720, p. 1.

BAM 700 defines trafficking as:

- The buying or selling of FAP benefits for cash or consideration other than eligible food. Examples would be liquor, exchange of firearms, ammunition, explosives or controlled substances.
- Selling products purchased with FAP benefits for cash or consideration other than eligible food.
- Purchasing containers with deposits, dumping/discarding product and then returning containers to obtain cash refund deposits.

BAM 700 (7/1/2013), p. 2.

Trafficking is also defined as knowingly using, transferring, acquiring, altering, purchasing, possessing, presenting for redemption or transport food stamps or coupons or access devices other than authorized by the Food Stamp Act of 1977. 7 USC 2011 to 2030

An IPV requires that the Department establish by clear and convincing evidence that the client has intentionally withheld or misrepresented information for the **purpose** of establishing, maintaining, increasing or preventing reduction of program benefits or eligibility. BAM 720, p. 1 (emphasis in original); see also 7 CFR 273(e)(6). Clear and

convincing evidence is evidence sufficient to result in a clear and firm belief that the proposition is true. See M Civ JI 8.01.

In this case, the Department has established that Respondent's mother's Bridge card was used after her death. However, the Department has not proven by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent used the Bridge card or allowed someone else to use the Bridge card after her mother's death.

The Department demonstrated that Respondent lived in the same home as her mother as of the date of Respondent's application for medical assistance, [REDACTED]. (Exhibit 1, pp. 11, 13 15). The Department established that Respondent was her mother's home health aide (Exhibit 1, pp. 60, 61, and testimony of OIG agent at hearing). The Department established that Respondent's mother died on October 20, 2013 (Exhibit 1, p. 53). The Department demonstrated that Respondent's mother's Bridge card continued to be used after Respondent's mother's death (Exhibit 1, pp. 65-68). The Department established that Respondent's Bridge card and Respondent's mother's Bridge card were used in the same stores after the death of Respondent's mother (Exhibit 1, pp. 65-68, 75-78). However, the Department also demonstrated that Respondent had a FAP authorized representative with the same last name as Respondent's mother's last name (Exhibit 1, p. 50). In addition, when the OIG agent spoke with Respondent, Respondent indicated that her daughter used her Bridge card (Exhibit 1, p. 4) Therefore, it is likely that Respondent's daughter was Respondent's FAP authorized representative, and as such was authorized to use Respondent's Bridge card.

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that Respondent would be a likely suspect in the unauthorized use of her deceased mother's Bridge card, but it is just as likely that Respondent's daughter used the Bridge card without Respondent's knowledge, since Respondent's daughter had no restrictions on using Respondent's Bridge card. The Department has not established by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent used her deceased mother's Bridge card without authorization (i.e., "trafficked" FAP benefits) or allowed another person to use the Bridge card without authorization.

Disqualification

A court or hearing decision that finds a client committed IPV disqualifies that client from receiving program benefits. BAM 720, p. 12. A disqualified recipient remains a member of an active group as long as he lives with them, and other eligible group members may continue to receive benefits. BAM 720, p. 13.

Clients who commit an IPV are disqualified for a standard disqualification period except when a court orders a different period, or except when the OI relates to MA. BAM 720, p. 13. Refusal to repay will not cause denial of current or future MA if the client is otherwise eligible. BAM 710, p. 2. Clients are disqualified for periods of one year for the first IPV, two years for the second IPV, lifetime disqualification for the third IPV, and ten years for a FAP concurrent receipt of benefits. BAM 720, p. 16.

In this case, the Department has not established that Respondent committed an IPV. Therefore, Respondent is not disqualified from receiving FAP benefits.

Overissuance

When a client group receives more benefits than entitled to receive, the Department must attempt to recoup the OI. BAM 725, p. 1.

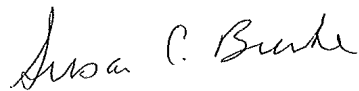
In this case, the Department has not established an OI.

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, if any, concludes that:

1. The Department has not established by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent committed an IPV.
2. The Department has not established that Respondent received an OI of program benefits.

The Department is ORDERED to delete the OI and cease any recoupment action.



Susan Burke
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: **10/16/2014**

Date Mailed: **10/16/2014**

SCB / hw

NOTICE: The law provides that within 30 days of receipt of the above Hearing Decision, the Respondent may appeal it to the circuit court for the county in which he/she lives or the circuit court in Ingham County.

cc:

