

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

██████████
██████████
██████████

Reg. No.: 15-007466
Issue No.: 1008; 6001
Case No.: ██████████
Hearing Date: June 11, 2015
County: WAYNE-DISTRICT 31

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Robert J. Chavez

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; and Mich Admin Code, R 792.11002. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on June 11, 2015, from Detroit, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included ██████████. Participants on behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services (Department) included ██████████ ██████████ Hearings Facilitator and ██████████ ██████████, Family Independence Specialist.

ISSUE

Did the Department properly close Claimant Family Independence Program (FIP) and Child Development and Care (CDC) benefits due to noncompliance with work 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 a FIP and CDC recipient.
2. On May 1, 2015, Claimant's FIP and CDC benefits were closed due to a failure to attend PATH activities; CDC was closed for lack of need due to the removal from the PATH program.
3. On May 6, 2015, Claimant requested a hearing.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Department policies are contained in the Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), Department of Health and Human Services Reference Tables Manual (RFT), and Department of Health and 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 Department of Human Services) 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-.3131.

The Child Development and Care (CDC) program is established by Titles IVA, IVE and XX of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 601-619, 670-679c, and 1397-1397m-5; the Child Care and Development Block Grant of 1990, PL 101-508, 42 USC 9858 to 9858q; and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, PL 104-193. The program is implemented by 45 CFR 98.1-99.33. The Department administers the program pursuant to MCL 400.10 and provides services to adults and children pursuant to MCL 400.14(1) and Mich Admin Code, R 400.5001-.5020.

All Family Independence Program (FIP) and Refugee Assistance Program (RAP) eligible adults and 16- and 17-year-olds not in high school full-time must be referred to the Partnership, Accountability, Training, and Hope (PATH) program or other employment service provider, unless deferred or engaged in activities that meet participation requirements. Clients who have not been granted a deferral must participate in employment and/or self-sufficiency related activities to increase their employability and to find employment. BEM 230A, p. 1 (2014). A cash recipient who refuses, without good cause, to participate in assigned employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activities is subject to penalties. BEM 230A, p. 1. This is commonly called “noncompliance”. BEM 233A defines noncompliance as failing or refusing to, without good cause:

“...Appear and participate with the PATH Program or other employment service provider...” BEM 233A pg. 1 (2014).

However, non-participation can be overcome if the client has “good cause”. Good cause is a valid reason for failing to participate with employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activities that are based on factors that are beyond the control of the non-participatory person. BEM 233A. A claim of good cause must be verified and documented.

The penalty for noncompliance at application is group ineligibility. BEM 233A.

After reviewing the facts of the case, the undersigned cannot reach the conclusion that Claimant was noncompliant.

Noncompliance requires a finding that Claimant failed or refused to attend work-related activities. The Department has failed to submit evidence that Claimant actually failed to attend work-related activities. While a DHS-2444, Notice of Noncompliance was submitted, this notice lacks a proper foundation; no evidence was submitted showing that the Claimant actually failed to attend, and the notice cannot be used to prove itself.

Therefore, as no evidence has been submitted that Claimant failed to attend PATH, the undersigned cannot hold that Claimant failed to participate in work related activities, and as such, any sanction against the Claimant for failing to attend must necessarily be in error.

For these reasons, the Administrative Law Judge holds that the Department has failed to meet their burden in showing that the Claimant was noncompliant.

With regard to the CDC program, the Department allegedly closed the benefits for a lack of need, as Claimant was removed from the PATH program. However, as the undersigned has established that Claimant should not have been removed from the PATH program, it therefore follows that Claimant's need reason was also not removed. As such, the CDC program closure was also improper.

Furthermore, Claimant turned in a medical verification documenting need for medical family preservation needs. The Department alleged that this document was falsified, but provided no evidence of falsification other than unsubstantiated allegations.

As such, the undersigned cannot hold that the document in question was falsified, and this document should have been accepted to verify CDC need. If Claimant had a CDC need, then Claimant's CDC case should not have closed, even in the absence of PATH activities.

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 failed to satisfy its burden of showing that it acted in accordance with Department policy when it closed Claimant's FIP and CDC benefits and imposed a sanction on Claimant's benefit case.

DECISION AND ORDER

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

THE DEPARTMENT IS ORDERED TO BEGIN DOING THE FOLLOWING, IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEPARTMENT POLICY AND CONSISTENT WITH THIS HEARING DECISION, WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THE DATE OF MAILING OF THIS DECISION AND ORDER:

1. Remove all sanctions imposed on Claimant's benefit case in relation to the case in question.
2. Restore Claimant's FIP and CDC benefits retroactive to the date of negative action.



Robert J. Chavez
Administrative Law Judge
for Nick Lyon, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

Date Signed: **6/29/2015**

Date Mailed: **6/29/2015**

RJC / tm

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 copy of the claim or application for appeal must be filed with the Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS).

A party may request a rehearing or reconsideration of this Hearing Decision from 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 48909-8139

cc:

[REDACTED]