

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

MAHS Reg. No.: 15-024327
Issue No.: ESO
Agency Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: February 17, 2016
County: DHHS Special
Processing Office

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: C. Adam Purnell

HEARING DECISION

Pursuant to a September 8, 2014 federal lawsuit, the Department of Health and Human Services (Department) issued notices to Medicaid applicants who were potentially denied full Medicaid coverage based on immigration status between January 2014 and May 2015. The notice included information about how to request a hearing. Petitioner filed a request for a hearing and accordingly this matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to Michigan Administrative Hearing Rules (R 792.10101 – R 792.11903) and the Administrative Procedures Act, 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 *et seq.*

After due notice, a three-way telephone conference hearing was held on February 17, 2016, from Lansing, Michigan. The Petitioner was represented by [REDACTED] (Petitioner's husband). The Department was represented by [REDACTED] (Eligibility Specialist).

ISSUE

Did the Department properly determine Petitioner's immigration status or citizenship when determining Medicaid (MA) eligibility?

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. Petitioner is originally from Iraq.
2. Petitioner became a permanent U.S. resident on July 19, 2011. [Exhibit 1, p. 1-15].
3. On April 7, 2014, Petitioner applied for MA benefits. [Exh. 1, pp. 1-11].
4. On the MA application, Petitioner indicated that she had eligible immigration status. [Exh. 1, p. 6].

5. On the date of MA application, the Petitioner was a permanent resident.
6. Beginning April, 2014 through January, 2016, the Department approved Petitioner's MA application for Emergency Services Only (ESO) MA coverage. [Exh. 1, pp. 12-14].
7. In August, 2015, the Department issued a notice to the Petitioner indicating that she may have been denied full MA coverage based on immigration status between January 2014 and May 2015.
8. On August 11, 2015, Petitioner requested a hearing. [Exh. 1, p. 2].
9. On January 7, 2016, the Department mailed Petitioner a Benefit Notice (DHS-176) which indicated that Petitioner's MA case was redetermined for full MA coverage for April, 2014 through January, 2016 pursuant to the Unan lawsuit. [Exh. 1, pp. 17-18].

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 Medical Assistance (MA) program is established by Title XIX of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 1396-1396w-5; 42 USC 1315; the Affordable Care Act of 2010, the collective term for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Pub. L. No. 111-148, as amended by the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-152; and 42 CFR 430.10-.25. The Department administers the MA program pursuant to 42 CFR 435, MCL 400.10, and MCL 400.105-.112k.

Policy requires the Department determine the alien status of each non-citizen requesting benefits at application, member addition, redetermination and when a change is reported. BEM 225 (1-1-2014), p. 1.

To be eligible for full MA coverage, a person must be a U.S. citizen or an alien admitted to the U.S. under a specific immigration status. BEM 225, p. 2. The alien status of each non-citizen must be verified to be eligible for full MA coverage. BEM 225, p. 2.

A person claiming U.S. citizenship is not eligible for ESO coverage. BEM 225, p. 2. U.S. citizenship must be verified with an acceptable document to continue to receive Medicaid. BEM 225, p. 2. Citizenship/alien status is not an eligibility factor for emergency services only (ESO) MA. However, the person must meet all other eligibility factors, including residency. BEM 225, p. 2.

MA coverage is limited to emergency services for any: (1) persons with certain alien statuses or U.S. entry dates as specified in policy; (2) persons refusing to provide citizenship/alien status information on the application; and/or (3) persons unable or refusing to provide satisfactory verification of alien information. BEM 225, p. 3. All other

eligibility requirements including residency **must** be met even when MA coverage is limited to emergency services. BEM 225, p. 3.

Persons listed under the program designations in Acceptable Status meet the requirement of citizenship/alien status. Eligibility may depend on whether or not the person meets the definition of Qualified Alien. BEM 225, p. 3.

"Qualified alien" means an alien who is lawfully admitted for **permanent residence** under the INA. BEM 225, p. 4 (Emphasis added). For MA, an individual is limited to emergency services for the first five years in the U.S. BEM 225, p. 8.

The coverage of a person who is unable to obtain verification of alien status or refuses to cooperate in obtaining it is limited to emergency services until verification is obtained. BEM 225, p. 20.

In this case, Petitioner's AHR credibly testified that his wife entered the U.S. in July, 2011. He also credibly testified that Petitioner was a permanent U.S. resident as of July 19, 2011. The record also shows that Petitioner, at the time of application, was a permanent resident. [Exh. 1, pp. 1-15]. The record further shows that Petitioner listed on the application that she had eligible immigration status. [Exh. 1, p. 6]. The Department provided Petitioner with ESO MA coverage. It was not before January 7, 2016, when the Department manually mailed Petitioner a Benefit Notice (DHS-176) which indicated that she was eligible for full MA coverage from April, 2014 through January, 2016. [Exh. 1, pp. 17-18]. Based on the date of the DHS-176, however, Petitioner would have only received full MA for a few weeks in January, 2016. If Petitioner was eligible for full MA during this time period, she should be afforded retroactive MA benefits. The record does not show whether Petitioner was truly provided with retroactive MA benefits during the relevant time period.

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 **did not** properly determine Petitioner's immigration status or citizenship when determining MA eligibility.

DECISION AND ORDER

Accordingly, the Department's determination about MA eligibility based on immigration status 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. Redetermine MA eligibility in accordance with Department policy.
2. Determine whether Petitioner is entitled to retroactive MA benefits.

3. Notify Petitioner in writing of the Department's new MA eligibility determination.



C. Adam Purnell
Administrative Law Judge
for Nick Lyon, Director
Department of Health and Human
Services

Date Mailed: **2/23/2016**

CAP/las

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.

cc:

