



RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS  
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM  
Christopher Seppanen  
Executive Director

SHELLY EDGERTON  
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: July 13, 2016  
MAHS Docket No.: 16-006698  
Agency No.: [REDACTED]  
Petitioner: [REDACTED]

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Robert J. Chavez**

### **HEARING DECISION**

Following Petitioner'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 15, 2016, from Detroit, Michigan. The Petitioner appeared pro se. The Department of Health and Human Services (Department) was represented by [REDACTED], Family Independence Specialist.

### **ISSUE**

Did the Department properly terminate Petitioner's benefits for noncompliance with the PATH program?

### **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 was an FIP recipient in Wayne County.
2. Petitioner was a mandatory PATH participant.
3. Petitioner was referred to the PATH program.
4. Petitioner did not attend the PATH program.
5. On March 16, 2016, Petitioner was sent a DHS-2444, which scheduled a triage for March 23, 2016.

6. On March 23, 2016, a triage was held.
7. Petitioner attended the triage via teleconference.
8. Petitioner did not provide documentary evidence of good cause.
9. The Department held that Petitioner had no good cause for their non-participation with work related activities.
10. The Department found Petitioner noncompliant.
11. On March 16, 2016, Petitioner was sent a notice of case action.
12. This was 1<sup>st</sup> incident of noncompliance for the Petitioner.
13. Petitioner's case was sanctioned and closed beginning April 1, 2016.
14. On May 11, 2016, Petitioner requested a hearing.

### **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.

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. Hope. (PATH) Program or other employment service provider, unless deferred or engaged in activities that meet participation requirements. These clients 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 "non-compliance". BEM 233A defines non-compliance as failing or refusing to, without good cause:

"...Participate in employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activities...." BEM 233A pg. 2 (2015).

Refusing suitable employment is also defined as quitting a job, and is reason for being found non-participatory. BEM233A, pg 3.

However, non-participation can be overcome if the client has “good cause”. Good cause is a valid reason for non-participation 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 is FIP closure. For the second occurrence of non-compliance on the FIP case, the client is sanctioned for a period not exceeding 6 months. BEM 233A.

Furthermore, PATH participants cannot be terminated from the PATH program without first scheduling a “triage” meeting with the client to jointly discuss noncompliance and good cause. At these triage meetings, good cause is determined based on the best information available during the triage and prior to the negative action date. Good cause may be verified by information already on file with DHS or MWA. BEM 233A.

If the client establishes good cause within the negative action period, penalties are not imposed. The client is sent back to PATH, if applicable, after resolving transportation, CDC, or other factors which may have contributed to the good cause. BEM 233A.

After reviewing the facts of the case, the undersigned holds that the Department has properly shown that Petitioner was non-participatory. Supporting documents show that Petitioner made no contact with the PATH program. Department Exhibit 3-5

Additionally, the Department appears to have provided a procedurally correct triage; a triage was properly held, Petitioner was given a chance to provide evidence of good cause, and a determination of good cause was made using the evidence at hand.

However, Petitioner submitted no evidence of good cause.

Thus, as there was no proof of good cause, the Department could not have found good cause when it reviewed the case at triage.

Therefore, the Department has met its burden in proving its case. It has shown that Petitioner was non-participatory with PATH and employment related activities. It showed that Petitioner did not meet the standards of good cause. It showed that a triage was properly held, and that Petitioner was given an adequate chance to submit documentation of good cause, which Petitioner failed to do.

BEM 233A states that the Petitioner must submit verification and documentation of good cause, and the Administrative Law Judge agrees that proof up to the current point in time has been lacking. Therefore, because Petitioner has failed to prove that she had good cause, and failed to submit evidence of good cause to the Department before the


date of negative action, as well as failed to submit evidence that she was not non-participatory, the Administrative Law Judge holds that the Department was correct to find the Petitioner in noncompliance, and correct to impose the sanction prescribed.

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 closed Petitioner's FIP benefits and levied a sanction on Petitioner's FIP case.

**DECISION AND ORDER**

Accordingly, the Department's decision is AFFIRMED.

RC/tm

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

**NOTICE OF APPEAL:** A party may appeal this Order in circuit court within 30 days of the receipt date. A copy of the circuit court appeal must be filed with the Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS).

A party may request a rehearing or reconsideration of this Order if the request is received by MAHS within 30 days of the date the Order was issued. The party requesting a rehearing or reconsideration must provide the specific reasons for the request. MAHS will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration.

A written request may be mailed or faxed to MAHS. If submitted by fax, the written request must be faxed to (517) 335-6088; 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

DHHS

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