



RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS  
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM

SHELLY EDGERTON  
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: August 29, 2017  
MAHS Docket No.: [REDACTED] 17-003572  
Agency No.: [REDACTED]  
Petitioner: [REDACTED]  
Respondent: [REDACTED]

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Christian Gardocki**

**HEARING DECISION FOR INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION AND  
OVERISSUANCE**

Upon the request for a hearing by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), 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 45 CFR 235.110; and with Mich Admin Code, R 400.3130 and 400.3178. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on [REDACTED], from Detroit, Michigan. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) was represented by [REDACTED], regulation agent, with the Office of Inspector General. Respondent did not appear.

**ISSUES**

The first issue is whether MDHHS established Respondent received an overissuance (OI) of benefits.

The second issue is whether MDHHS established that Respondent committed an intentional program violation (IPV).

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

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

1. Respondent was an ongoing recipient of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits from the State of Michigan.
2. From [REDACTED], through [REDACTED], Respondent received employment income from an employer (hereinafter "Employer").

3. Respondent failed to timely report employment income from Employer to MDHHS.
4. Respondent's failure to timely report income was clearly and convincingly purposeful.
5. Respondent received an OI of [REDACTED] in FAP benefits from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] as a result of unreported employment income.
6. On [REDACTED], MDHHS requested a hearing to establish Respondent committed an IPV and received an OI of [REDACTED] in FAP benefits for the months from [REDACTED].
7. MDHHS withdrew their allegation for [REDACTED] of the OI because [REDACTED] of the alleged [REDACTED] overissuance had been collected.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

The Food Assistance Program (FAP) [formerly known as the Food Stamp program] is established by the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, 7 USC 2011 to 2036a and is implemented by the federal regulations contained in 7 CFR 273. MDHHS (formerly known as the Department of Human Services) administers FAP pursuant to MCL 400.10, the Social Welfare Act, MCL 400.1-.119b, and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3001-.3011. MDHHS policies are contained in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), and Reference Tables Manual (RFT).

MDHHS requested a hearing, in part, to establish Respondent received an overissuance of benefits. MDHHS presented an unsigned Intentional Program Violation Repayment Agreement (Exhibit 1, pp. 5-6) dated [REDACTED]. The document alleged Respondent received an over-issuance of [REDACTED] in FAP benefits from [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. The document, along with MDHHS testimony, alleged the OI was based on Respondent's failure to timely report employment income.

MDHHS testimony conceded that [REDACTED] of the alleged OI was collected. MDHHS testimony indicated that an OI of [REDACTED] was still sought. MDHHS' testimony was functionally a partial withdrawal of [REDACTED] of the OI sought in their hearing request.

MDHHS' hearing request will be partially dismissed based on their verbal withdrawal. The analysis will proceed to consider the validity of the remaining alleged OI of [REDACTED].

When a client group receives more benefits than it is entitled to receive, MDHHS must attempt to recoup the overissuance. BAM 700 (January 2016), p. 1. An overissuance [bold lettering removed] is the amount of benefits issued to the client group or CDC provider in excess of what it was eligible to receive. *Id.* Recoupment [bold lettering removed] is a MDHHS action to identify and recover a benefit overissuance. *Id.*, p. 2.

Clients must report changes in circumstance that potentially affect eligibility or benefit amount. BAM 105 (May 2012), p. 7. Changes [in income] must be reported within 10 days of receiving the first payment reflecting the change. *Id.*

MDHHS presented documentation from TheWorkNumber.com (Exhibit 1, pp. 10-13) Various gross pays from Employer to Respondent were listed. Pay dates ranged from [REDACTED]. Respondent's first check was stated to be for a pay period ending [REDACTED]. A hire date of [REDACTED], was stated.

MDHHS presented a Wage Match-Details (Exhibit 1, pp. 27-28) with a "run date" of [REDACTED]. The document informed MDHHS that Respondent received [REDACTED] in employment income from Employer during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2014. MDHHS testimony indicated that the document represents when MDHHS first learned of Respondent's income from Employer.

MDHHS presented Respondent's FAP benefit issuance history (Exhibit 1, p. 26). Monthly issuances from [REDACTED] totaled [REDACTED].

MDHHS presented an Issuance Summary (Exhibit 1, p. 43) and corresponding FAP overissuance budgets (Exhibit 1, pp. 29-42) from October 2014 through May 2015. The budgets factored, in part, Respondent's FAP benefit issuances as stated on presented documents. The budgets also factored Respondent's earnings as stated on presented TheWorkNumber.com documents. A total OI of [REDACTED] was calculated.

MDHHS policy categorizes overissuances into 3 different types: client error, agency error, and intentional fraud (see BAM 700). Client and Agency errors are not pursued if the estimated amount is less than [REDACTED] per program. BAM 700, p. 9.

The above policy allows MDHHS to pursue an OI no matter which party was at fault (assuming an OI of [REDACTED] or more is established). The OI budgets, as presented, can only be found accurate if it is found Respondent is at fault for the OI.

Presented budgets factored all of Respondent's income with Employer as unreported. Factoring employment income as unreported deprives clients from receipt of a 20% employment income credit (see BEM 556). The analysis will proceed to determine if Respondent reported income from Employer.

MDHHS presented Respondent's application for FAP benefits (Exhibit 1, pp. 14-25). Respondent's signature was dated [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Respondent's application reported having no employment income.

It is theoretically possible that Respondent reported to MDHHS his employment income shortly after applying for FAP benefits. Such a possibility would assume that Respondent only did not report income from Employer because he hadn't received his first pay. Such a possibility is remote.

As of Respondent's application date, it was verified that Respondent was hired and completed a pay period of employment. Respondent should have reported the income as part of the application. Not reporting expected income on a FAP application renders it improbable that an applicant later verbally reported the unreported employment income to MDHHS.

It is found that Respondent failed to report employment income. Thus, MDHHS properly deprived Respondent of the 20% employment income credit.

Presented evidence sufficiently verified Respondent's lack of reporting caused an OI of benefits during the alleged OI period. Presented evidence established that MDHHS correctly calculated the OI to be [REDACTED]. The analysis will proceed to determine if Respondent's non-reporting amounted to an IPV.

The Code of Federal Regulations defines an IPV. Intentional program violations shall consist of having intentionally: (1) made a false or misleading statement, or misrepresented, concealed or withheld facts; or (2) committed any act that constitutes a violation of the Food Stamp Act, the Food Stamp Program Regulations, or any State statute for the purpose of using, presenting, transferring, acquiring, receiving, possessing or trafficking of coupons, authorization cards or reusable documents used as part of an automated benefit delivery system. 7 CFR 273.16 (c).

[An IPV is a] benefit overissuance resulting from the willful withholding of information or other violation of law or regulation by the client or his authorized representative. Bridges Program Glossary (October 2015), p. 36. A 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 their reporting responsibilities.

BAM 720 (January 2016), p. 1; see also 7 CFR 273(e)(6).

IPV is suspected when there is **clear and convincing** [emphasis added] evidence that the client or CDC provider has intentionally withheld or misrepresented information for the purpose of establishing, maintaining, increasing or preventing reduction of program benefits or eligibility. *Id.* 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. It is a standard which requires reasonable certainty of the truth; something that is highly probable. Black's Law Dictionary 888 (6th ed. 1990).

MDHHS alleged Respondent failed to report to MDHHS the start of employment income; this was established. By alleging an IPV, MDHHS essentially contended that Respondent's failure was purposeful and intentional.

The OI analysis included a discussion of Respondent's failure to report employment income on an application. Respondent's failure to report employment income on an application is interpreted as an intentional misreporting. If Respondent had no obligation to report income he had not yet received, it is alternatively found that he purposely did not subsequently report employment income to MDHHS.

Clients must completely and truthfully answer all questions on forms and in interviews. BAM 105 (July 2015), p. 8. Respondent's written statements were indicative of a lack of truthfulness.

MDHHS established that Respondent was aware of reporting requirements. There was no indication Respondent failed to understand reporting requirements.

Generally, a written misreporting by a client is persuasive evidence that the client committed an IPV. Presented evidence does not suggest deviation from the general rule. It is found MDHHS clearly and convincingly established Respondent committed an IPV by failing to report employment income.

The standard disqualification period is used in all instances except when a court orders a different period. BAM 725 (January 2016), p. 16. [MDHHS is to] apply the following disqualification periods to recipients determined to have committed an IPV... one year for the first IPV... two years for the second IPV [, and] lifetime for the third IPV. *Id.*

MDHHS did not allege a previous history of IPV's by Respondent. Based on presented evidence, a 12-month disqualification is justified.

### **DECISION AND ORDER**

The administrative law judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, finds that MDHHS withdrew their dispute concerning █████ of an OI from █████. Petitioner's hearing request is **PARTIALLY DISMISSED**.

The administrative law judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, finds that MDHHS established that Respondent received an overissuance of \$ █████ in FAP benefits from █████ due to an IPV. The MDHHS request to establish an overissuance against Respondent is **PARTIALLY APPROVED**.

The administrative law judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, finds that MDHHS established that Respondent received an overissuance of FAP benefits from █████ due to an IPV. The MDHHS request to establish a 12-month disqualification against Respondent is **APPROVED**.

CG/hw



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**Christian Gardocki**  
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**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Petitioner**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Respondent**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]