



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: September 13, 2017  
MAHS Docket No.: 17-004795  
Agency No.: [REDACTED]  
Petitioner: OIG  
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 September 11, 2017, 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**

1. The first issue is whether MDHHS established Respondent received an overissuance (OI) of benefits.
2. 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], Respondent received employment income from an employer (hereinafter "Employer").

3. Respondent failed to timely report to MDHHS employment income from Employer.
4. Respondent's failure to timely report income was not clearly and convincingly purposeful.
5. Respondent received an OI of \$ [REDACTED] in FAP benefits from [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].

### 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. 6-7) dated [REDACTED]. The document alleged Respondent received an overissuance of \$ [REDACTED] in FAP benefits from [REDACTED]. The document, along with MDHHS testimony, alleged the OI was based on Respondent's failure to timely report employment income.

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 an IG-001 Employee Wage History by Social Security Number SSN (Exhibit 1, pp. 36-41) for Respondent. The report is known to list quarterly income for employees as reported by their employers to the State of Michigan. Income from Employer to Respondent was listed from the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> quarters of 2014.

MDHHS presented documentation from TheWorkNumber.com (Exhibit 1, pp. 42-44). The documentation listed various gross payments from Employer to Respondent from [REDACTED].

MDHHS presented Respondent's FAP benefit issuance history (Exhibit 1, p. 45) from [REDACTED]. Monthly issuances of \$ [REDACTED] were listed as "paid" from [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] also listed an issuance of \$ [REDACTED] though "EBT Expungement" was the corresponding status of the issuance. Handwritten statements implied that only [REDACTED] of the issuance was expunged. The handwritten statement was consistent with Respondent's expenditure history.

Respondent's EBT expenditure history (Exhibit 1, pp. 47-51) from [REDACTED], was presented. The history listed monthly issuances of [REDACTED] throughout the alleged OI period. Respondent's balance as of [REDACTED], was [REDACTED]. Thus, it is found that only [REDACTED] of Respondent's benefits issuances from the alleged OI period were expunged.

MDHHS presented an Issuance Summary (Exhibit 1, p. 53) and corresponding FAP overissuance budgets (Exhibit 1, pp. 54-63) from [REDACTED]. 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 documentation. A total OI of \$ [REDACTED] was calculated.

MDHHS policy categorizes overissuances into three 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 MDHHS properly calculated the alleged OI by factoring Respondent's employment income as unreported.

MDHHS alleged Respondent failed to timely report employment income to MDHHS, in part, based on the absence of income budgeted from Employer as part of Respondent's original FAP benefit issuances during the alleged OI period. The allegation was also based on an absence of documentation of employment income within Respondent's casefile. MDHHS testimony implied that a search of Respondent's case file revealed no indication of Respondent timely reporting employment income with Employer. The testimony is not definitive evidence that Respondent failed to timely report employment income, however, Respondent did not appear to rebut the testimony, nor was superior evidence available.

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

MDHHS presented Respondent's Redetermination for FAP benefits (Exhibit 1, pp. 12-21). Respondent's electronic signature was dated [REDACTED]. Respondent reported no employment income within her household. MDHHS testimony conceded the document did not report misinformation.

MDHHS presented a Notice of Case Action (Exhibit 1, pp. 22-27) dated [REDACTED]. The notice informed Respondent of an approval of FAP benefits. A budget summary indicated that no employment income was factored. Boilerplate language indicated that Respondent was to report various changes to MDHHS within 10 days (see Exhibit 1, p. 27); changes in employment and income were among the examples of

changes that required reporting. MDHHS also presented a Change Report (Exhibit 1, pp. 28-29) dated [REDACTED], also informing Respondent of reporting responsibilities.

MDHHS presented a Notice of Case Action (Exhibit 1, pp. 30-35) dated [REDACTED]. The notice informed Respondent of an approval of FAP benefits. A budget summary indicated that no employment income was factored. Boilerplate language indicated that Respondent was to report various changes to MDHHS within 10 days (see Exhibit 1, p. 27); changes in employment and income were among the examples of changes that required reporting.

Respondent's failure to timely report employment income to MDHHS could reasonably be explained by Respondent forgetting to report. Though reporting documents and benefits notices are known to advise clients to report changes within 10 days, it does not ensure that a client would not accidentally forget.

MDHHS did not present verification of a written misreporting by Respondent. Generally, MDHHS will have difficulty in establishing a clear and convincing purposeful failure to report information when there is not verification of misreporting. Presented evidence was not persuasive in overcoming the general rule.


It is found MDHHS failed to clearly and convincingly establish that Respondent committed an IPV. Accordingly, it is found MDHHS may not proceed with imposing an IPV disqualification against Respondent.

### **DECISION AND ORDER**

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, finds that MDHHS established that Respondent received [REDACTED] in over-issued FAP benefits from [REDACTED]. The MDHHS request to establish an overissuance is **APPROVED**.

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, finds that MDHHS failed to establish that Respondent committed an IPV related to an OI of FAP benefits due to unreported income for the months from [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. The MDHHS request to establish Respondent committed an IPV is **DENIED**.

CG/

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**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]

**Petitioner**

[REDACTED]

**Respondent**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]