



RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

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

SHELLY EDGERTON  
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: October 26, 2017  
MAHS Docket No.: 17-007525  
Agency No.: [REDACTED]  
Petitioner: OIG  
Respondent: [REDACTED]

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:** Kevin Scully

**HEARING DECISION FOR INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION**

Upon the request for a hearing by the Department of Health and Human Services (Department), 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 with Mich Admin Code, R 400.3130 and R 400.3178. After due notice, telephone hearing was held on October 2, 2017, from [REDACTED] Michigan. The Department was represented by [REDACTED] Regulation Agent of the Office of Inspector General (OIG). Respondent represented herself.

**ISSUES**

1. Did Respondent receive an overissuance (OI) of Food Assistance Program (FAP) and Family Independence Program (FIP) benefits that the Department is entitled to recoup?
2. Did the Department establish by clear and convincing evidence that the Respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV)?
3. Should Respondent be disqualified from the Food Assistance Program (FAP) and Family Independence Program (FIP)?

**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 acknowledged under penalties of perjury that her redetermination form, received by the Department on November 10, 2013, was examined by or read to her, and, to the best of her knowledge, contained facts that were true and complete. Exhibit A, pp 19-22.

2. Respondent reported to the Department on her November 10, 2013, Redetermination form that no one in her household had been convicted of a drug-related felony. Exhibit A, p 22.
3. On an application for assistance dated April 28, 2014, Respondent acknowledged her duties and responsibilities including the duty to report any drug-related felony convictions by any benefit group members. Exhibit A, pp 23-47.
4. Respondent did not have an apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill this requirement.
5. Respondent acknowledged under penalties of perjury that her April 28, 2014, application for assistance was examined by or read to her, and, to the best of her knowledge, contained facts that were true and complete. Exhibit A, p 45.
6. Respondent reported on her April 28, 2014, application for assistance that no one in her benefit group had been convicted of a drug-related felony. Exhibit A, pp 32-33.
7. Respondent acknowledged under penalties of perjury that her State Emergency Relief (SER) application form dated July 18, 2014, was examined by or read to her, and, to the best of her knowledge, contained facts that were true and complete. Exhibit A, pp 51-74.
8. Respondent reported on her July 18, 2014, State Emergency Relief (SER) application that no one in her benefit group had been convicted of any drug-related felonies. Exhibit A, pp 60-61.
9. Respondent failed to report that on [REDACTED], her husband, a mandatory group member, had pled guilty to Delivery of Cocaine Less Than 50 Grams. Exhibit A, pp 11-14.
10. Respondent failed to report that on [REDACTED], her husband, a mandatory benefit group member, had pled guilty to Possession with Intent to Delivery Marijuana. Exhibit A, pp 15-18.
11. If Respondent had truthfully reported her husband's history of drug-related felony convictions to the Department then he would have been permanently disqualified from the Food Assistance Program (FAP) and Family Independence Program (FIP).
12. If Respondent's husband had been disqualified from the Food Assistance Program (FAP) and the Family Independence Program (FIP), then Respondent would have been eligible for Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits totaling \$ [REDACTED] and Family Independence Program (FIP) totaling \$ [REDACTED]. Exhibit A, pp 75-83.

13. Respondent received Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits totaling \$ [REDACTED] from May 1, 2014, through June 30, 2014. Exhibit A, p 50.
14. Respondent received Family Independence Program (FIP) benefits totaling \$ [REDACTED] from May 16, 2014, through August 31, 2014. Exhibit A, pp 48-49.
15. On May 9, 2017, the Department sent the Respondent an Intentional Program Violation Repayment Agreement (DHS-4350) with notice of a \$ [REDACTED] overpayment, and a Request for Waiver of Disqualification Hearing (DHS-826). Exhibit A, pp 5-8.
16. The Department's OIG filed a hearing request on May 9, 2017, to establish an OI of benefits received by Respondent as a result of Respondent having allegedly committed an IPV. Exhibit A, p 2.
17. This was Respondent's first established IPV.
18. A notice of hearing was mailed to Respondent at the last known address and was not returned by the United States Postal Service as undeliverable.

### **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 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. The Department (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.

The Department's OIG requests IPV hearings for the following cases:

- FAP trafficking OIs that are not forwarded to the prosecutor.

- Prosecution of welfare fraud or FAP trafficking is declined by the prosecutor for a reason other than lack of evidence, and
  - the total OI amount for the FIP, SDA, CDC, MA and FAP programs is \$500 or more, or
  - the total OI amount is less than \$500, and
    - the group has a previous IPV, or
    - the alleged IPV involves FAP trafficking, or
    - the alleged fraud involves concurrent receipt of assistance (see BEM 222), or
    - the alleged fraud is committed by a state/government employee.

Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM) 720 (January 1, 2016), pp 12-13.

### **Overissuance**

When a client group receives benefits than they are entitled to receive, the Department must attempt to recoup the overissuance. Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM) 700 (October 1, 2016), p 1.

An individual convicted of a felony for the use, possession, or distribution of controlled substances two or more times in separate periods will be permanently disqualified if both offenses occurred after August 22, 1996. Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 203 (October 1, 2017), p 2.

Respondent acknowledged under penalties of perjury that her redetermination form, received by the Department on November 10, 2013, was examined by or read to her, and, to the best of her knowledge, contained facts that were true and complete. Respondent did not have an apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill this requirement. Respondent reported to the Department on her November 10, 2013, that no one in her household had been convicted of any drug-related felonies.

Respondent acknowledged under penalties of perjury that her April 28, 2014, application form was examined by or read to her, and, to the best of her knowledge, contained facts that were true and complete. Respondent did not have an apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill this requirement. Respondent reported on her April 28, 2014, application for assistance that no one in her household had been convicted of any drug-related felonies.

Respondent acknowledged under penalties of perjury that her State Emergency Relief (SER) application form dated July 18, 2014, was examined by or read to her, and, to the best of her knowledge, contained facts that were true and complete. Respondent did not have an apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill this requirement. Respondent reported on her July 18, 2014, SER application that no one in her household had been convicted of any drug-related felonies.

FAP group composition is established by determining who lives together, the relationship of the people who live together, whether the people living together purchase and prepare food together or separately, and whether the persons resides in an eligible living situation. Department of Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 212 (January 1, 2017), p 1.

Respondent's husband was listed as a household member on the forms she submitted to the Department, which made him a mandatory benefit group member. Respondent failed to report to the Department that her husband had pled guilty to drug-related felony offenses on [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. If Respondent had reported her husband's history of drug-related felony convictions then he would have been permanently disqualified from the benefit group. A disqualified recipient remains a member of an active group as long as he lives with them, and other eligible group members may continue to receive benefits. BAM 720, p. 16.

Respondent received FAP benefits totaling \$ [REDACTED] from May 1, 2014, through June 30, 2014, but would have been eligible for only \$ [REDACTED] if her husband had been permanently disqualified from FAP. Respondent received FIP benefits totaling \$ [REDACTED] from May 16, 2014, through August 31, 2014, but would have been eligible for only \$ [REDACTED] if her husband had been permanently disqualified from FIP. Therefore, Respondent received a \$ [REDACTED] overissuance of FAP benefits and a \$ [REDACTED] overissuance of FIP benefits.

### **Intentional Program Violation**

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 reporting responsibilities.

BAM 700, p 7, BAM 720, p. 1.

An IPV requires that the Department establish by clear and convincing evidence that the client has intentionally withheld or misrepresented information for the purpose of establishing, maintaining, increasing or preventing reduction of program benefits or eligibility. BAM 720, p. 1 (emphasis in original); see also 7 CFR 273(e)(6).

The Department has the burden of establishing by clear and convincing evidence that the Respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV). The clear and convincing evidence standard, which is the most demanding standard applied in civil cases, is established where there is evidence so clear, direct and weighty and convincing that a conclusion can be drawn without hesitancy of the truth of the precise facts in issue. *Smith v Anonymous Joint Enterprise*, 487 Mich 102; 793 NW2d 533 (2010), reh den 488 Mich 860; 793 NW2d 559 (2010).

Clear and convincing proof is that which produces in the mind of the trier of fact a firm belief or conviction as to the truth of the precise facts in issue. Evidence may be uncontroverted and yet not be clear and convincing. Conversely, evidence may be clear and convincing even if contradicted. *Id.*

Respondent acknowledged under penalties of perjury that her application and redetermination forms were examined by or read to her, and, to the best of her knowledge, contained facts that were true and complete. Respondent did not have an apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill this requirement. Respondent reported to the Department on November 10, 2013, April 28, 2014, and July 18, 2014, that no one in her household had been convicted of any drug-related felonies.

The information listed on the forms Respondent submitted to the Department was neither true nor complete. Respondent's husband, a mandatory group member, has more than one drug-related felony conviction with each offenses occurring after August 22, 1996, and he is permanently disqualified from FAP and FIP. As a result of Respondent's failure to truthfully and complete report her circumstances to the Department, she received an overissuance of FAP and FIP benefits.

Respondent did not deny her husband's conviction history but testified that she unintentionally failed to report her husband's history of drug-related felony offenses to the Department.

This Administrative Law Judge finds that the Department has presented clear and convincing evidence that the Respondent intentionally failed to report her husband's history of drug-related felony convictions to the Department for the purposes of becoming eligible for and maintaining her eligibility for FAP benefits that she would not have been eligible for otherwise.

### **Disqualification**

A court or hearing decision that finds a client committed IPV disqualifies that client from receiving program benefits. BAM 720, p. 15-16. A disqualified recipient remains a

member of an active group as long as he lives with them, and other eligible group members may continue to receive benefits. BAM 720, p. 16.

Clients who commit an IPV are disqualified for a standard disqualification period except when a court orders a different period, or except when the OI relates to MA. BAM 720, p. 13. Refusal to repay will not cause denial of current or future MA if the client is otherwise eligible. BAM 710 (July 1, 2013), p. 2. Clients are disqualified for periods of one year for the first IPV, two years for the second IPV, lifetime disqualification for the third IPV, and ten years for a FAP concurrent receipt of benefits. BAM 720, p. 16.

The record evidence indicates that this is Respondent's first established IPV violation.

The Department has established an Intentional Program Violation (IPV).

### **DECISION AND ORDER**

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, if any, concludes that:

1. The Department has established by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent committed an IPV.
2. Respondent did receive an OI of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits in the amount of \$ [REDACTED]
3. Respondent did receive an OI of Family Independence Program (FIP) benefits in the amount of \$ [REDACTED]
4. The Department is ORDERED to initiate recoupment procedures for the amount of \$ [REDACTED] in accordance with Department policy.
5. It is FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent be disqualified from the Food Assistance Program (FAP) and Family Independence Program (FIP) for a period of 12 months.

KS/nr

  
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Kevin Scully  
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]