



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

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

SHELLY EDGERTON
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: December 21, 2016
MAHS Docket No.: 16-014123
Agency No.: [REDACTED]

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Janice Spodarek

DECISION AND ORDER

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and upon the Petitioner's request for a hearing.

After due notice, a hearing was held on 11/30/16. Petitioner appeared and testified. [REDACTED] appeared as a witness.

[REDACTED] Resource Center Team Leader represented the [REDACTED] Michigan, subcontractor with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (Respondent).

ISSUE

Did the Department properly determine that the Petitioner does not require a Nursing Facility Level of Care?

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. Respondent is a contract agent of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and is responsible for waiver eligibility determinations and the provision of MI Choice waiver services in its service area.
2. On [REDACTED], Petitioner contacted Respondent for waiver services and a telephone intake was completed. (Exhibit A; Testimony).

3. During that intake, Respondent found that Petitioner was not eligible for the waiver program based on her answers to the intake questions. (Exhibit A; Testimony).
4. On [REDACTED], the Respondent informed Petitioner, and, issued written notice that her request for services was denied. (Exhibit A; Testimony)
5. On [REDACTED], the Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS) received Petitioner's Request for Hearing.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Medical Assistance Program is established pursuant to Title XIX of the Social Security Act and is implemented by Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations. It is administered in accordance with state statute, the Social Welfare Act, the Administrative Code, and the State Plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act Medical Assistance Program.

Petitioner is seeking services through the Respondent's Home and Community Based Services for Elderly and Disabled. The waiver is called MI Choice in Michigan. The program is funded through the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (formerly HCFA) to the Respondent. Regional agencies, in this case RESPONDENT, function as the Respondent's administrative agency.

Waivers are intended to provide the flexibility needed to enable States to try new or different approaches to the efficient and cost-effective delivery of health care services, or to adapt their programs to the special needs of particular areas or groups of recipients. Waivers allow exceptions to State plan requirements and permit a State to implement innovative programs or activities on a time-limited basis, and subject to specific safeguards for the protection of recipients and the program. Detailed rules for waivers are set forth in subpart B of part 431, subpart A of part 440 and subpart G of part 441 of this chapter.

42 CFR 430.25(b)

The Medicaid Provider Manual (MPM) outlines the governing policy for the MI Choice Waiver program and, with respect to functional eligibility and the intake process for the program, the applicable version of the MPM states in part:

2.2 FUNCTIONAL ELIGIBILITY

The MI Choice waiver agency must verify an applicant's medical/functional eligibility for program enrollment by inputting a valid Michigan Medicaid Nursing Facility Level of Care Determination (LOCD) into the online LOCD application. A valid LOCD is defined as an LOCD that was completed in-person with the applicant according to MDHHS policy and put in the online LOCD application within 14 calendar days after the date of enrollment into the MI Choice program. (Refer to the Directory Appendix for website information.) The LOCD is discussed in the Michigan Medicaid Nursing Facility Level of Care Determination subsection of this chapter. Additional information can be found in the Nursing Facility Coverages Chapter and is applicable to MI Choice applicants and participants.

The applicant must also demonstrate a continuing need for and use of at least two covered MI Choice services, one of which must be Supports Coordination. This need is originally established through the Initial Assessment using the process outlined in the Need for MI Choice Services subsection of this chapter.

* * *

3.2 MI CHOICE INTAKE GUIDELINES

The MI Choice Intake Guidelines is a list of questions designed to screen applicants for eligibility and further assessment. Additional probative questions are permissible when needed to clarify eligibility. The MI Choice Intake Guidelines does not, in itself, establish program eligibility. A properly completed MI Choice Intake Guidelines is mandatory for MI Choice waiver agencies prior to placing applicants on a MI Choice waiting list when the agency is operating at its capacity. Individuals who score as Level C, Level D, Level D1 or Level E are those applicants determined potentially eligible for program enrollment and will be placed on the MI Choice waiting list. The date of the MI Choice Intake Guidelines contact establishes the chronological placement of the applicant on the waiting list.

The MI Choice Intake Guidelines may be found on the MDHHS website. (Refer to the Directory Appendix for website information.)

When the waiver agency is at capacity, applicants requesting enrollment in MI Choice must either be screened by telephone or in person using the MI Choice Intake Guidelines at the time of their request for proper placement on the waiting list. If a caller is seeking services for another individual, the waiver agency shall either contact the applicant for whom services are being requested or complete the MI Choice Intake Guidelines to the extent possible using information known to the caller. For applicants who are deaf, hearing impaired, or otherwise unable to participate in a telephone interview, it is acceptable to use an interpreter, a third-party in the interview, or assistive technology to facilitate the exchange of information.

As a rule, nursing facility residents who are seeking to transition into MI Choice are not contacted by telephone but rather are interviewed in the nursing facility. For the purposes of establishing a point of reference for the waiting list, the date of the initial nursing facility visit (introductory interview) shall be considered the same as conducting a MI Choice Intake Guidelines, so long as the functional objectives of the MI Choice Intake Guidelines are met. (Refer to the Waiting Lists subsection for additional information.) Specifically, the introductory meeting must establish a reasonable expectation that the applicant will meet the functional and financial eligibility requirements of the MI Choice program within the next 60 days.

Applicants who are expected to be ineligible based on MI Choice Intake Guidelines information may request a face-to-face evaluation using the Michigan Medicaid Nursing Facility Level of Care Determination and financial eligibility criteria. Such evaluations should be conducted as soon as possible, but must be done within 10 business days of the date the MI Choice Intake Guidelines was administered. MI Choice waiver agencies must issue an adverse action notice advising applicants of any and all appeal rights when the applicant appears ineligible either through the MI Choice Intake Guidelines or a face-to-face evaluation.

When an applicant appears to be functionally eligible based on the MI Choice Intake Guidelines but is not expected to meet the financial eligibility requirements, the MI Choice waiver agency must place the applicant on the agency's waiting list if it is anticipated that the applicant will become financially eligible within 60 days. Individuals may be placed on the waiting lists of multiple waiver agencies.

The MI Choice Intake Guidelines is the only recognized tool accepted for telephonic screening of MI Choice applicants and is only accessible to MI Choice waiver agencies. It is not intended to be used for any other purpose within the MI Choice program, nor any other Medicaid program. MI Choice waiver agencies must collect MI Choice Intake Guidelines data electronically using software through the MDHHS contracted vendor.

*MPM, October 1, 2015 version
MI Choice Waiver Chapter, pages 1, 5-6
(Underline added by ALJ)*

In this case, Respondent conducted an intake using the required MI Choice Intake Guidelines. Based on the answers Petitioner gave during the intake, Petitioner scored as a Level B-Indicator of Homemaking Services. Given her level, Respondent determined that Petitioner was ineligible for waiver services per policy and, as required, it issued an adverse action notice advising Petitioner of her right to appeal that determination. (Exhibit A).

Petitioner subsequently filed an appeal regarding the denial of services and, in doing so, bears the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that the Waiver Agency erred in denying her request for services. Moreover, this Administrative Law Judge is limited to reviewing the Waiver Agency's decision in light of the information it had at the time it made that decision.

On appeal, Petitioner was informed that a reapplication can be made, and could have been made at any time, and further, that the assessment is simply a snap shot in time of the prior 3 days prior to the assessment. Again, Respondent emphasized that the MIG is a snap shot as to a specific point in time, and, that the measure can fluctuate based on the point in time when the assessment is completed. Moreover, any medical changes not captured by the time period assessed under the MIG cannot be taken into account in making an assessment.

Pursuant to the above cited MPM policy, Respondent was required to utilize the MI Choice Intake Guidelines. The MI Choice Intake Guidelines is a list of questions designed to screen applicants for eligibility and further assessment.

In this case there is no evidence that the Waiver Agency inaccurately recorded what Petitioner reported. Based on Petitioner's own reports, she did not meet the criteria for services. Accordingly, based on the available information, the Waiver Agency's decision must be affirmed.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based on the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the Waiver Agency properly denied Petitioner's request for services through the MI Choice Waiver Program based on the available evidence.

It is therefore ordered that this matter is **AFFIRMED**.

JS/cg



Janice Spodarek

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 30763
Lansing, Michigan 48909-8139

DHHS -Dept Contact

[REDACTED]

DHHS -Dept Contact

[REDACTED]

Petitioner

[REDACTED]

Community Health Rep

[REDACTED]