

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

██████████ (Appellant)

Docket: 25-2026

v.

Department of Human Services (DHS)

DECISION

I. INTRODUCTION

DHS issued a Benefits Decision Notice (“BDN”) on March 16, 2025, that informed the Appellant that Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (“SNAP”) benefits would decrease on April 1, 2025. The Appellant initiated this matter to the Executive Hearing Office (“EHO”) on May 6, 2025, to dispute this action and sought relief to have this decision overturned.

An Administrative hearing was conducted on the matter via Microsoft Teams on June 12, 2025, the Appellant declined the video option. For the reasons discussed in this decision, the Appellant’s appeal is denied.

II. JURISDICTION

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services is designated by R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-7.2-6.1(2) to be the entity responsible for legal service functions, including appeals and hearings, law interpretation and related duties of itself and four agencies; one of which is DHS. Hearings are held in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act (R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-35.1 et. seq.).

III. ISSUES

The issue before this Appeals Officer was whether or not the decrease to the Appellant’s SNAP benefit allotment was processed in accordance with regulations.

IV. STANDARD OF PROOF

It is well settled that in formal or informal adjudications modeled on the Federal Administrative Procedures Act, unless otherwise specified, a preponderance of the evidence is generally required to prevail. (2 Richard J. Pierce, Administrative Law Treaties § 10.7 (2002) & see Lyons v. Rhode Island Pub. Employees Council 94, 559 A.2d 130, 134 (R.I. 1989) (preponderance standard is the “normal” standard in civil cases)). This means that for each element to be proven, the factfinder must believe that the facts asserted by the proponent are more probably true than false. (Id.). When there is no direct evidence on a particular issue, a fair preponderance of the evidence may be supported by circumstantial evidence. (Narragansett Electric Co. vs. Carbone, 898 A.2d 87 (R.I. 2006))

V. PARTIES AND EXHIBITS

The Department was represented by Eligibility Technician III Stephanie Santos, who submitted SNAP Regs. 1.5.7 Section A subsection (4) (EE) which was marked exhibit 1. The Appellant appeared and testified on their own behalf. The Administrative record contained the appeal form, the BDN sent by DHS and correspondence from the EHO to the Appellant.

VI. RELEVANT LAW/REGULATIONS

R.I. General Laws 40-6 designates DHS as the principal agency of the State responsible to administer SNAP. Federal Regulations are contained in 7 Code of Federal Regulations (“C.F.R.”) Parts 271 through 282. SNAP benefits are processed by DHS based on the household’s information and according to the rules and regulations that govern the program as authorized by the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (as amended through Pub. Law 116-94). SNAP regulations in Rhode Island are conducted in accordance with Rhode Island Code of Regulations (“RICR”) 218-RICR-20-00-1.

An excess medical deduction is that portion of total medical expenses more than \$35.00 per month. Medicare premiums incurred by the recipient are allowable expenses. The household is not required to report changes in its medical expenses during the certification period. If the household voluntarily reports a change in the medical expenses, the worker will proceed according to 218-RICR-20-00-1.13.1. (218-RICR-20-00-1.5.7(A)(c)).

Recipients entitled to the excess medical deduction must receive such deductions, if they incur such expenses. An excess medical deduction is that portion of total medical expenses more than \$35.00 per month, excluding special diets, incurred by all household members who are elderly or disabled (Including disabled veterans or surviving disabled spouses/children of veterans). Medicare premiums, and any cost-sharing or spend-down expenses incurred by Medicaid recipients are allowable expenses for a receipt to be entitled to the excess medical deduction. (218-RICR-20-00-1.5.7(A)(6)(c)(1)(EE)).

The Agency is required to take prompt action on all changes of which it becomes aware to determine if the change affects the household's eligibility or allotment. The Agency shall not act on changes in medical expenses unless the information is received from the household or if the changes are verified upon receipt and do not necessitate contact with the household. (218-RICR-20-00-1.13.1(D)).

VII. FINDINGS OF FACTS

1. The Appellant is a SNAP recipient, his benefits are certified thru November 30, 2026.

2. An excess medical deduction was being applied to his SNAP calculation for his Medicare Part B premium expense that he was responsible to pay.

3. The Appellant applied for the Medicare Premium Payment Program (“MPP”), which is a benefit that helps low-income elders over 65 years of age and adults with disabilities to pay the cost of Medicare premiums.

4. MPP benefits were approved by DHS as of January 1, 2025, this benefit takes three months to coordinate payment.

5. As the Appellant was no longer responsible to pay the Medicare premium, DHS ended the excess medical deduction as of March 31, 2025, which caused the SNAP benefits to decrease.

6. The Appellant did not disagree that he was no longer responsible to pay this expense. The Appellant disagreed with the decrease to the SNAP benefit allotment.

7. The record was held open at hearing to allow for DHS to provide the policy reference that supported this Agency decision, which was received on June 16, 2025, with no exception from the Appellant the record of hearing was closed.

VIII. DISCUSSION

DHS utilizes one integrated eligibility system, RI Bridges, in which all DHS benefits are processed. Although this is an appeal regarding SNAP, the change that led to the SNAP decrease was initiated by the Appellant’s MPP application. The MPP application was processed in RI Bridges, therefore as DHS was aware that the Appellant was no longer responsible to pay the Medicare Part B expense, this change had to be applied to the Appellant’s active SNAP benefits. The Department maintained these actions were taken according to regulations.

DHS is required to take prompt action on all changes it becomes aware of to determine the changes in the household’s SNAP eligibility or allotment. There is an exception, that if the changes are regarding the medical expense deduction the information must come from either the

household or be verified upon receipt. As the information of the change was verified upon receipt as DHS also processed the MPP application, this exemption does not apply. As DHS was mandated by their regulations to make this change, the Departments actions in this matter were correct.

X. CONCLUSION OF LAW

After review of the Administrative record, I conclude the following reasons for the decision rendered:

The Appellant no longer was responsible to pay the Medicare Part B premium expense, therefore according to 218-RICR-20-00-1.5.7(A)(1), he was no longer entitled to the excess medical deduction.

The change to the SNAP allotment was made according to 218-RICR-20-00-1.13.1(D), as it was verified upon receipt and did not necessitate any further contact with the household for verification.

X. DECISION

It is found that the Appellant's SNAP benefits were decreased in accordance with regulations. Therefore, it is ordered that DHS's decision in this matter is final and this appeal is denied.

/s/Holly Young | Appeals Officer | Executive Office of Health and Human Services

NOTICE OF APPELLANT RIGHTS

This Final Order constitutes a final order of the Departments of Human Services pursuant to the RI General Laws §42-15-12. Pursuant to RI General Laws §43.35.15, a final order may be appealed to the Superior Court Sitting in and for the County of Providence within thirty (30) days of the mailing date of this decision. Such appeal, if taken, must be completed by filing a petition for review in Superior Court. The filing of the complaint does not itself stay enforcement of this order. The Agency may grant, or the reviewing court may order, a stay upon the appropriate terms.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that I mailed, via regular mail, postage prepaid, a true copy of the foregoing to

_____ and via email to

_____; copies were sent electronically to representatives of the DHS policy unit, the DHS Appeals Unit, Kristen Cornford and Stephanie Santos, on this 10th day of

July, 2025.

