

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

[REDACTED]

v.

DOCKET NO. 25-3648

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

DECISION

I. INTRODUCTION

A telephonic hearing on the above-entitled matter was held on October 7, 2025, and the Appellant declined the option of a video hearing. [REDACTED] (Appellant) initiated this matter to appeal the reduction in his Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits made by the Department of Human Services (DHS). The Appellant disagrees with the monthly \$71.00 benefit amount and is seeking to have his SNAP benefits increased. For the reasons discussed in more detail below, the Appellant's appeal is denied.

II. JURISDICTION

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) is authorized and designated by R.I.G.L. § 42-7.2-6.1 and EOHHS regulations 210-RICR-10-05-2 to be the entity responsible for appeals and hearings related to SNAP. The administrative hearing

was held in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, R.I.G.L. § 42-35-1 et. seq. and EOHHS regulation 210-RICR-10-05-2.

III. ISSUE

The issue is whether DHS's reduction in the Appellant's SNAP benefits was done in compliance with the SNAP regulations.

IV. PARTIES AND EXHIBITS

Heidy Mena-Torres, DHS Eligibility Technician III appeared on behalf of DHS and provided testimony regarding the case. DHS submitted the following exhibits into evidence:

- Exhibit #1 - Benefit Decision Notice (BDN) dated August 8, 2025.
- Exhibit #2 - Eligibility determination results.
- Exhibit #3 - HUD Housing agreement signed February 19, 2025.
- Exhibit #4 - Medical bills with statement dates of 2022 through 2025 and prescription printout dated August 6, 2025.

The Appellant appeared and testified on his own behalf. The Appellant did not submit any documentary evidence at hearing.

V. RELEVANT LAW/REGULATIONS

When determining SNAP allotment amounts, the household's monthly countable net income must be determined. Once the gross income is determined, several deductions are applied. First a standard deduction is applied. For a household of one, this amounts to \$204.00. 218-RICR-20-00-1.5.7(A)(6)(b)(2). Next, excess shelter costs are deducted. This consists of taking the gross income less the above deductions and dividing it in half. The amount of shelter costs that exceeds half of the countable income is excluded, up to \$712.00. If the household pays

a utility cost, a standard utility allowance of \$822 is used regardless of the actual cost of utilities. 218-RICR-20-00-1.5.7(A)(6)(e)(2) & 218-RICR-20-00-1.15(D)(1)(f & g).

An excess medical deduction is allowed for elderly or disabled household members who incur medical expenses in excess of thirty-five dollars (\$35) per month excluding special diets. 218-RICR-20-1.5.7(A)(6)(c)(1). The household's monthly medical deduction for the certification period is based on the information reported and verified by the household, and any anticipated changes that can be reasonably expected to occur during the certification period based on available information about the individual's medical condition, public or private health insurance coverage, and the current verified medical expenses. 218-RICR-20-00-1.5.7(6)(c)(3).

Per regulation 218-RICR-20-1.15.1(D)(2) a household's monthly allotment is equal to the maximum SNAP allotment for the household's size reduced by thirty percent (30%) of the household's net monthly income.

VI. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The household consists of the Appellant, household of one.
2. The Appellant completed a SNAP recertification on August 6, 2025.
3. On August 6, 2025, the Appellant submitted his medical bills to DHS.
4. A Benefit Decision Notice (BDN) dated August 6, 2025, informed the Appellant his SNAP benefits were increasing effective August 1, 2025, to \$71.00. According to the eligibility results submitted by the Agency, the Appellant had been receiving more than \$71.00 per month in SNAP benefits. The Appellant testified, however, that at some point he had received \$20.00. Presumably, the August 6, 2025, BDN reflected the increase from the \$20.00 based on the submission of additional medical expenses.

5. The Appellant filed an appeal on August 6, 2025, stating “need to ask what changed? Added medical documents/bills.”
6. According to the Agency’s testimony the medical bills from 2025 were applied to the Appellant’s SNAP case and he received the medical deduction. The Agency further testified that the other medical bills he submitted could not go towards the medical deduction as the dates on the medical bills were from 2022 and 2023 which were outside of his current SNAP certification period. However, the Agency did not testify as to how much of a medical deduction he was actually given.
7. The Appellant’s monthly rental expense decreased from \$975.00 to \$427.00. The Agency testified this also contributed to the decrease in benefits.
8. The Appellant does not dispute DHS’ calculation of his medical or rental expenses, except to question how they caused his monthly SNAP benefits to decrease to \$71.00.
9. The Appellant argues that due to his varying illnesses he now requires a special diet and \$71.00 is not enough to cover his food. He further argues that he also needs wi-fi services to monitor his medical devices.

VII. DISCUSSION

The Agency maintains that the Appellant’s monthly SNAP benefit amount of \$71.00 is based on his monthly gross income minus allowable income deductions. The Appellant argues that the monthly benefit amount of \$71.00 is a major decrease in the amount of SNAP benefits he had historically been receiving and is not enough to cover his food and therefore wants more SNAP benefits. The Appellant argues that DHS is not considering his various illnesses and that he requires a special diet.

Although the August 6, 2025, BDN states the Appellant was given an increase in SNAP benefits, the Agency concedes the \$71.00 is much less than what he was previously receiving. While it can be difficult to adjust to a decrease in SNAP benefits, an Appeal based on this argument alone is not enough to require an increase in SNAP benefits.

The amount of SNAP benefits a household receives is based on the household's size and net income. Other than the excess medical deduction, the Appellant does not dispute any of the income deductions he was given in DHS' calculation of his net income, including his excess shelter deduction which was based on his decreased rental expense. The Appellant first argues the lack of consideration for the cost of a special medical diet. Per SNAP regulation 218-RICR-20-00-1.5.7(A)(6)(c)(1), the costs associated with illness-related special diets are not an allowable medical expense for SNAP purposes. The Appellant further argues that he needs wi-fi service to monitor his medical devices. Per regulation 218-RICR-20-00-1.5.7(A)(6)(c)(3), the household's monthly medical deduction for the certification period is based on the information reported and verified by the household, based on available information about the individual's medical condition, public or private health insurance coverage, and the current verified medical expenses. The Appellant has not provided any medical documentation to support his claim for medically necessary wi-fi service. According to the Agency, most of the Appellant's submitted medical bills had dates of service between 2022 and 2023 and thereby could not be considered for a medical deduction during his current certification period. The medical bills that could be used were applied to his SNAP case and he received the correct medical deduction.

VIII. CONCLUSION OF LAW

After careful review of the testimony and evidence presented at the Administrative Hearing, this Appeals Officer concludes that DHS correctly determined the Appellant's SNAP benefit to be \$71.00 per month when they processed his SNAP renewal.

IX. DECISION

Based on the foregoing Findings of Facts, Conclusion of Law, and testimony it is found that a final order be entered that there is sufficient evidence to support DHS's action to decrease the Appellant's SNAP benefit.

APPEAL DENIED

/s/ Vermont Richardson
Appeals Officer

NOTICE OF APPELLATE 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 [REDACTED]; copies were sent via email to [REDACTED], to DHS Appeals Unit, Kirsten Cornford and to DHS.PolicyQuestions@dhs.ri.gov on this 22nd day of October, 2025.

