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

[redacted]

v.

DOCKET No. 26-4675 & 26-4687
CASE No. [redacted]

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

DECISION

I. INTRODUCTION

A Microsoft Teams hearing on the above-entitled matter was held on October 8, 2026. The Appellant, [redacted], initiated this matter to appeal the decision made by the Department of Human Services (DHS) denying her June 11, 2026, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application for failing to complete an interview. For the reasons discussed below, the Appellant's appeal is denied.

II. JURISDICTION

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) is authorized and designated by Rhode Island General Law (R.I.G.L.) § 42-7.2-6.1 and 210-RICR-10-05-2 to be the entity responsible for appeals and hearings related to DHS programs, such as SNAP. The administrative hearing was held in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act (R.I.G.L. § 42-35-1 et. seq.) and 210-RICR-10-05-2.

III. ISSUE

The issue is whether the SNAP denial for failing to complete an interview complied with Federal and/or State regulations.

IV. STANDARD OF PROOF

It is well settled that in 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) *& Lyons v. Rhode Island Pub. Employees Council 94*, 559 A.2d 130, 134 (R.I. 1989) (a preponderance standard is the "normal" standard in civil cases). For each element to be proven, the factfinder must believe that the facts asserted by the proponent are more probably true than false. When no direct evidence exists on a particular issue, a fair preponderance of evidence may be supported by circumstantial evidence. *Narragansett Electric Co. vs. Carbone*, 898 A.2d 87 (R.I. 2006).

V. PARTIES AND EXHIBITS

Present for DHS was Eligibility Technician III, Glenda Ramos. DHS offered the following documents that were entered and marked as exhibits at hearing.

- DHS Exhibit #1 – SNAP Benefit Decision Notice (BDN) dated July 10, 2026.
- DHS Exhibit # 2 – SNAP Eligibility Determination Results.
- DHS Exhibit # 3 – Interview Reminder Notice, dated June 11, 2026.
- DHS Exhibit # 4 – Notice of Missed Interview, dated June 16, 2026.
- DHS Exhibit #5 – Notice of Missed Interview, dated June 23, 2026.

The Appellant attended the hearing with her mother, [redacted]; both testified. The Appellant offered no documents as evidence at hearing.

VI. RELEVANT LAW/REGULATIONS

According to 218-RICR-20-00-1.3.4 (A), all households must have an interview with a qualified DHS agency representative either in person or via telephone, prior to initial certification and subsequent recertifications.

SNAP households that miss their first scheduled interview must be notified that they missed the appointment and that rescheduling another interview is the household's sole responsibility, within a time frame that ensures the application can be acted upon within 30 days of receipt. 218-RICR-20-00-1.3.4 (A)(1).

According to 218-RICR-20-00-1.3 (C)(1)(c), a SNAP application is valid for 60 days without requiring a new application.

VII. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. A SNAP application was received on June 11, 2026.
2. A reminder notice was issued to the Appellant on June 11, 2026, informing her that an interview needed to take place and that DHS would try to contact her. It also informed the Appellant that if she missed the interview, she was responsible for completing it by June 11, 2026, or SNAP benefits would be delayed or denied.
3. An interview was scheduled for June 16, 2026.
4. DHS called the Appellant but could not reach her by phone.
5. A Notice of Missed Interview was issued to the Appellant on June 16, 2026, informing the Appellant that she missed her scheduled interview and that it was her responsibility to complete a SNAP interview before July 11, 2026.
6. A second Notice of Missed Interview was issued on June 23, 2026. It informed the Appellant that she missed her scheduled interview and that she was solely responsible for completing the interview before July 11, 2026, or SNAP would be denied.
7. The Appellant stated she was in the hospital from May 29, 2026, until June 15, 2026, and then entered the hospital again on July 21, 2026, due to complications of surgery that she had during her first hospitalization. Due to this illness, the Appellant states

her mental state was impaired, and because of this, she was unable to complete an interview.

8. No Authorized Representative was listed on the application or on the Appellant's SNAP case in DHS's integrated eligibility system.

VIII. DISCUSSION

Two appeals were filed in this matter: the first on June 29, 2026 (Docket #26-4675) and the second on July 9, 2026 (Docket #26-4687), to dispute a SNAP denial. DHS received the SNAP application on June 11, 2026.

Although the Appellant had medical issues and was in and out of the hospital, no other person could have completed the SNAP interview because the application listed no authorized representative, and the Appellant's case listed none. An option for the Appellant would have been to provide permission for another person to complete the interview for her, if she was not feeling well enough to complete an interview herself. Still, this would have required the Appellant to answer DHS's call or contact DHS to give permission for someone else to complete the interview on her behalf. Since the Appellant failed to answer when DHS called for her scheduled interview and failed to contact DHS after she missed her interview, this option was unavailable because the Appellant was never in contact with DHS for her to provide the one-time consent. DHS sent four notices which informed the Appellant she had a scheduled interview, the consequences of missing the interview, that it was her sole responsibility to contact DHS to complete the interview because she missed the scheduled interview; yet the Appellant failed to follow the instructions provided to her on the notices. After careful review of the SNAP regulations, there is no medical exemption or exception that allow the interview to be waived due to illness or injury. Since the interview was not completed, the SNAP denial is valid.

IX. CONCLUSION OF LAW

After a review of the evidence and testimony at the administrative hearing, it is clear that,

1. An interview is required for SNAP prior to initial SNAP certification approval.
2. A SNAP application is valid for 60 days if the household takes the necessary actions within 60 days from the initial application filing date, without the need for a new SNAP application.
3. The Appellant did not complete the SNAP application requirement within 60 days from the initial application date.
4. No authorized representative was listed on the SNAP application, so the only person who could have completed the interview was the Appellant.
5. The SNAP denial was valid based on the State regulations because an interview was not completed.

X. DECISION

Based on the foregoing findings of fact, conclusion of law, evidence, and testimony, it is found that a final order is entered that sufficient evidence supports the SNAP denial for failing to complete the SNAP interview requirement.

APPEAL DENIED

/s/ Robert Pelosi
EOHHS Appeals Officer

NOTICE OF APPELLANT RIGHTS

This decision is a final order under R.I.G.L. § 42-35-12. Under R.I.G.L. § 42-35-15, this Order may be appealed to court within 30 days of the mailing of this decision. If you take this route, you must complete the appeal by filing a complaint in court. Filing the complaint does not

itself stay enforcement of this order. The agency may grant a stay, or the reviewing court may order one, upon the appropriate terms.

Appeals are generally filed in the Providence County Superior Court. However, appeals affecting or concerning children under the age of 18 and/or appeals of a DCYF action may need to be filed in Providence Family Court. If you have any questions about which court a complaint for appeal should be made, you should seek the advice of an attorney, Rhode Island Legal Services, or the clerk of the court where you wish to file your appeal. You can find the courts' contact information on the judiciary's website (https://www.courts.ri.gov). Copies of the appeal must be served upon all parties in your case within 10 days of the filing of your appeal.

If you exercise any of these appellate rights, please inform the EOHHS Appeals Office of this so we can prepare a copy of the record for the court. You can contact the Appeals Office at OHHS.AppealsOffice@ohhs.ri.gov, 401.462.2132 (Phone), 401.462.0458 (Fax), or at 3 West Road, Virks Building, Cranston, RI 02908.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that I mailed a true copy of the foregoing to [redacted], via regular mail, postage prepaid. Copies were sent, via email, to [redacted], to DHS representatives Glenda Ramos, Laura Larivee, Kirsten Cornford, the DHS Appeals Unit, and the DHS Policy Office on this 14th day of October, 2026.

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