
In the Matter of the Appeal of
[REDACTED]
from a determination by the New York City
Department of Social Services

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**DECISION
AFTER
FAIR
HEARING**

JURISDICTION

Pursuant to Section 22 of the New York State Social Services Law (hereinafter Social Services Law) and Part 358 of Title 18 NYCRR, (hereinafter Regulations), a fair hearing was held on October 13, 2011, in New York City, before Robert Swiderski, Administrative Law Judge. The following persons appeared at the hearing:

For the Appellant

[REDACTED], Appellant's Representative

For the Social Services Agency

Michael Bartholomew, Representative
Theresa Sandoval, Representative

ISSUE

Was the Agency's determination to reduce the Appellant's Personal Care Services correct?

FACT FINDING

An opportunity to be heard having been afforded to all interested parties and evidence having been taken and due deliberation having been had, it is hereby found that:

1. The Appellant, who is 85 years old, has been in receipt of Medical Assistance, including Personal Care Services.

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2. By notice dated August 16, 2011, the Agency sent the Appellant a notice informing the Appellant that the Appellant's Personal Care Services was initially authorized for 4 hours per day, 3 days per week.

3. On August 25, 2011, this hearing was requested.

APPLICABLE LAW

Official notice may be taken of all facts of which judicial notice could be taken and of other facts within the specialized knowledge of the agency. §306(4), State Administrative Procedure Act.

At a fair hearing concerning the denial of an application for or the adequacy of Public Assistance, Medical Assistance, HEAP, Food Stamp benefits or services, the appellant must establish that the agency's denial of assistance or benefits was not correct or that the appellant is eligible for a greater amount of assistance or benefits. Except where otherwise established by law or regulation, in fair hearings concerning the discontinuance, reduction or suspension of Public Assistance, Medical Assistance, Food Stamp benefits or services, the social services agency must establish that its actions were correct. 18 NYCRR 358-5.9(a).

In general, a recipient of Public Assistance, Medical Assistance or Services (including child care and supportive services) has a right to a timely and adequate notice when the Agency proposes to discontinue, suspend, reduce or change the manner of payment of such benefits. An adequate, though not timely, notice is required where the Agency has accepted or denied an application for Public Assistance, Medical Assistance or Services; or has increased the Public Assistance grant; or has determined to change the amount of one of the items used in the calculation of a Public Assistance grant or Medical Assistance spenddown; or has determined that an individual is not eligible for an exemption from work requirements. 18 NYCRR 358-3.3(a). In addition, pursuant to 18 NYCRR 358-3.3(d), an adequate, though not timely, notice is required for a Public Assistance or Medical Assistance recipient when, for example, the Agency has factual information confirming the death of the recipient; the Agency has received a clear written statement from the recipient that he or she no longer wishes to receive Public Assistance or Medical Assistance; the Agency has reliable information that the recipient has been admitted to an institution or prison; the recipient's whereabouts are unknown and mail has been returned to the Agency; or the recipient has been accepted for Public Assistance or Medical Assistance in another district.

A timely notice means a notice which is mailed at least 10 days before the date upon which the proposed action is to become effective. 18 NYCRR 358-2.23.

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The social services district must send a notice of discontinuance on a State-prescribed form to a Medical Assistance recipient if it determines that the recipient has become ineligible for Medical Assistance. 18 NYCRR 360-2.7(b). Recipient means a person who is, or has been, receiving a covered program or service. 18 NYCRR 358-2.18.

An adequate notice is a notice of action, an adverse action notice or an action taken notice which sets forth the action that the Agency proposes to take or is taking, and if a single notice is used for all affected assistance, benefits or services, the effect of such action, if any, on a recipient's other assistance, benefits or services. In addition, the notice must contain:

for reductions, the previous and new amounts of assistance or benefits provided;

the effective date of the action;

the specific reasons for the action;

the specific laws and/or regulations upon which the action is based;

the recipient's right to request an agency conference and fair hearing;

the procedure for requesting an agency conference or fair hearing, including an address and telephone number where a request for a fair hearing may be made and the time limits within which the request for a fair hearing must be made;

an explanation that a request for a conference is not a request for a fair hearing and that a separate request for a fair hearing must be made;

a statement that a request for a conference does not entitle one to aid continuing and that a right to aid continuing only arises pursuant to a request for a fair hearing;

the circumstances under which public assistance, medical assistance, food stamp benefits or services will be continued or reinstated until the fair hearing decision is issued;

a statement that a fair hearing must be requested separately from a conference;

a statement that when only an agency conference is requested and there is no specific request for a fair hearing, there is no right to continued public assistance, medical assistance, food stamp benefits or services;

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a statement that participation in an agency conference does not affect the right to request a fair hearing;

the right of the recipient to review the case record and to obtain copies of documents which the agency will present into evidence at the hearing and other documents necessary for the recipient to prepare for the fair hearing at no cost;

an address and telephone number where the recipient can obtain additional information about the recipient's case, how to request a fair hearing, access to the case file, and/or obtaining copies of documents;

the right to representation by legal counsel, a relative, friend or other person or to represent oneself, and the right to bring witnesses to the fair hearing and to question witnesses at the hearing;

the right to present written and oral evidence at the hearing;

the liability, if any, to repay continued or reinstated assistance and benefits, if the recipient loses the fair hearing;

information concerning the availability of community legal services to assist a recipient at the conference and fair hearing; and

a copy of the budget or the basis for the computation, in instances where the social services agency's determination is based upon a budget computation.

18 NYCRR 358-2.2.

DISCUSSION

By notice dated August 16, 2011, the Agency sent the Appellant a notice informing the Appellant that the Appellant's Personal Care Services was initially authorized for 4 hours per day, 3 days per week. The Appellant, however, has been in receipt of Medical Assistance, including Personal Care Services. If the Agency's notice meant to take any action it was a reduction action, not an initial authorization.

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The Agency's August 16, 2011, notice is void. A notice must allow for the preparation of an adequate defense. Perry v. Wing, 242 A.D.2d 964, 665 N.Y.S.2d 947 (4th Dept. 1997); Mecca v. Dowling, 210 A.D.2d 821, 620 N.Y.S.2d 584 (3d Dept. 1994). The Agency's notice in this case, among other things, contained blank spaces where information was to be written, provided a citation for its action that lacks even a minimum of detail such that it is meaningless, provided a phone number for record access that is not even an Agency (and not even a New York City government) phone number, and provided a phone number for legal assistance information that is a fax number (meaning that no legal assistance information would ever be obtained by phoning the number). In addition, as above, if the Agency's notice meant to take any action it was a reduction action, not an initial authorization. The Agency's notice did not provide any basis as a reason for the Agency's reduction action.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Agency's determination to reduce the Appellant's Personal Care Services is not correct and is reversed.

1. The Agency is directed to restore, subject to other Agency actions or hearing decisions, the Personal Care Services lost by the Appellant as a direct result of the August 16, 2011, notice.

As required by 18 NYCRR 358-6.4, the Agency must comply immediately with the directives set forth above.

DATED: Albany, New York
11/23/2011

NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

By



Commissioner's Designee

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NOTICE OF DECISION OF INITIAL AUTHORIZATION/REAUTHORIZATION/OR DENIAL OF PERSONAL CARE SERVICES

NOTICE DATE: 08/16/2011	EFFECTIVE DATE: 08/30/2011	NAME AND ADDRESS OF AGENCY/CENTER OR DISTRICT OFFICE CASA 5 132 West 125th St - 5th floor New York, NY 10027
CASE NUMBER: [REDACTED]	CIN: [REDACTED]	
CASE NAME (And C/O Name if Present) AND ADDRESS [REDACTED]		GENERAL TELEPHONE NO. FOR QUESTIONS OR HELP
		OR Agency Conference (212) 666-4287 Fair Hearing Information and Assistance Record Access (800) 342-3334 Legal Assistance Information (212) 630-9897

OFFICE NO.	UNIT NO.	WORKER NO.	UNIT OR WORKER NAME	TELEPHONE NO.
CASA 5	SIP		Alif Abdullah	(212) 666-4860

This is to inform you of the following action taken on your request for personal care services effective

(Please read carefully)

INITIALLY AUTHORIZED

Personal Care Services have been initially authorized for 4 hours per day, 3 days per week. The Personal Care Services has been determined to be:

Level I
 Level II (Personal Care, Environmental and Nutritional Functions)

Your authorization period is from [] to []

REAUTHORIZED

Personal Care Services have been Reauthorized for [] hours per day, [] days per week. The Personal Care Services has been determined to be:

Level I
 Level II (Personal Care, Environmental and Nutritional Functions)

Your authorization period is from [] to []

DENIED

We intend to take this action because:

[REDACTED]

The law and/ or regulations(s) which allow us to do this are 18 NYCRR 505.14.

SIGNATURE OF WORKER
X Noemi Gayot/URN

REGULATIONS REQUIRE THAT YOU IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THIS DEPARTMENT OF ANY CHANGES IN NEEDS, INCOME, RESOURCES, LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OR ADDRESS
YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPEAL THIS DECISION
BE SURE TO READ THE BACK OF THIS NOTICE ON HOW TO APPEAL THIS DECISION

CONFERENCE AND FAIR HEARING INFORMATION

CONFERENCE: (Informal meeting with us): If you think our decision was wrong or if you do not understand our decisions, please call Denise Heyward at (212) 665-3233, or write to us at Medical Assistance Programs, Conference Unit, 132 West 125th St - 5th floor New York, NY 10027, to arrange a meeting. Sometimes this is the fastest way to solve any problems you may have. We encourage you to do this even when you ask for a fair hearing. This is not the way to request a fair hearing. If you ask for a conference, you are still entitled to a fair hearing.

STATE FAIR HEARING - Deadline for request: If you want the State to review our decision about your Medical Assistance you must ask for a fair hearing within 60 days from the date of this notice.

How to Request a Fair Hearing: You can ask for a fair hearing in writing, by telephone, in person, or over the Internet.

Write: Send a copy of this notice *completed*, to the Office of Administrative Hearings, New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, P.O. Box 1930, Albany, New York 12201. Please keep a copy for yourself.

Telephone: (800) 342-3334 (PLEASE HAVE THIS NOTICE WITH YOU WHEN YOU CALL)

Fax: Send a copy of this notice to fax number (518) 473-6735.

Walk-In: Bring a copy of this notice to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance at:
• 14 Boerum Place, 1st Floor, Brooklyn, OR
• 330 West 34th Street, 3rd Floor, Manhattan

On-Line: Complete and send the online request form at:
<https://www.otda.state.ny.us/oah/forms.asp>

If you cannot reach the State by phone or the Internet, please write to request a fair hearing before the deadline for requesting a fair hearing.

REQUEST FOR A FAIR HEARING

I want a fair hearing. This agency's actions was wrong because:

[Empty text box for reasons with scroll arrows]

Print Name: [Redacted]

Case Number: [Redacted]

Address: [Redacted]

Telephone: [Redacted]

Signature of Client: [Redacted]

Date: [Redacted]

YOU HAVE 60 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THIS NOTICE TO REQUEST A FAIR HEARING

If you request a fair hearing, the State will send you a notice informing you of the time and place of the hearing. You have the right to be represented by legal counsel, a relative, a friend or other person, or to represent yourself. At the hearing you, your attorney or other representative will have the opportunity to present written and oral evidence to demonstrate why the action should not be taken, as well as an opportunity to question any persons who appear at the hearing. Also, you have a right to bring witnesses to speak in your favor. You should bring the hearing any documents such as this notice, pay stubs, receipts, medical bills, hearing bills, medical verification, letters, etc. that may be helpful in presenting your case. If you need an interpreter, please advise the State when you request the hearing.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE: If you need free legal assistance, you may be able to obtain such assistance by contacting your local Legal Aid Society, other legal advocate group, or by checking your Yellow Pages under "Lawyers" or by calling the number indicated on the first page of this notice.

TO OBTAIN DOCUMENTS FROM THE HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION (HRA) FOR YOUR FAIR HEARING: Prior to your hearing date, HRA can provide you with free copies of the documents from your case file which HRA will present at the fair hearing, or, other documents from your file which you think you may need to prepare for your fair hearing. To request documents for your fair hearing, you may: fax your request (718) 722-7565 OR mail your request to the HRA Medicaid Fair Hearing Division, Rivera Liaison, 111 Livingston Street, 4th Floor, Brooklyn, New York 11201 OR call (718) 637-2425. You must include your fair hearing number with your request.

ATTENTION: Children under 19 years of age who are not eligible for Child Health Plus A or other health insurance may be eligible for the Child Health Plus B Insurance Plan (Child Health Plus B). The plan provides health care insurance for children. Call 1-800-522-5006 for information.