

# Office of Medicaid BOARD OF HEARINGS

Appellant Name and Address:



<b>Appeal Decision:</b>	Denied	<b>Appeal Number:</b>	2412821
<b>Decision Date:</b>	11/8/2024	<b>Hearing Date:</b>	9/13/2024
<b>Hearing Officer:</b>	Cynthia Kopka		

**Appearance for Appellant:**  
Pro se

**Appearance for MassHealth:**  
Geraldine Eliscard, Charlestown



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Office of Medicaid  
Board of Hearings  
100 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02171*

## APPEAL DECISION

<b>Appeal Decision:</b>	Denied	<b>Issue:</b>	Eligibility, under 65, income
<b>Decision Date:</b>	11/8/2024	<b>Hearing Date:</b>	9/13/2024
<b>MassHealth's Rep.:</b>	Geraldine Eliscard	<b>Appellant's Rep.:</b>	Pro se
<b>Hearing Location:</b>	Charlestown (remote)	<b>Aid Pending:</b>	No

### Authority

This hearing was conducted pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 118E, Chapter 30A, and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder.

### Jurisdiction

By notice dated August 7, 2024, MassHealth notified Appellant that she was not eligible for MassHealth benefits due to income. Exhibit 1. Appellant filed this appeal in a timely manner on August 19, 2024. Exhibit 2. 130 CMR 610.015(B). Denial of assistance is a valid basis for appeal. 130 CMR 610.032.

### Action Taken by MassHealth

MassHealth notified Appellant that she was not eligible for MassHealth benefits due to income.

### Issue

The appeal issue is whether MassHealth was correct in determining that Appellant's income was too high to qualify.

### Summary of Evidence

The MassHealth representative appeared by phone and testified as follows. Appellant is under the age of 65 and in a household of one. Appellant reported that her gross weekly income was \$450 per week. On August 7, 2024, MassHealth notified Appellant that she did not qualify for MassHealth benefits because her income was too high. Exhibit 1. Appellant's yearly income was projected to be \$23,398, which averages to \$1,949 monthly. This is 150.37% of the 2024 federal poverty level (FPL) for a household of one. The MassHealth representative testified that to qualify, Appellant's income would have to be at or below \$1,731.90 per month for a household size of one. Appellant is eligible for a subsidized plan through the Health Connector and should pick a plan and make a monthly payment on or before the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the month to qualify for the following month.

Appellant appeared by phone and provided a paystub with her hearing request, Exhibit 2. Appellant confirmed her income was \$450 weekly. Appellant asked if there was any way she could be accepted by MassHealth with this income. The MassHealth representative instructed Appellant to notify MassHealth of any changes, such as to income, household size, disability status, or pregnancy. These factors can affect eligibility. Appellant asked if she would have to appeal again if her income changed, and the MassHealth representative replied that Appellant may simply call MassHealth to provide the update. Appellant expressed understanding but requested a written appeal decision as confirmation.

## **Findings of Fact**

Based on a preponderance of the evidence, I find the following:

1. Appellant is in a household of one and under the age of 65.
2. Appellant's weekly gross income is \$450.
3. In 2024, the monthly FPL for a household of one was \$1,255; 133% of the FPL was \$1,670.
4. On August 7, 2024, MassHealth notified Appellant that she was not eligible for MassHealth benefits due to income. Exhibit 1.
5. Appellant filed this timely appeal on August 19, 2024. Exhibit 2.

## **Analysis and Conclusions of Law**

MassHealth regulations at 130 CMR 505.000 *et seq.* explain the categorical requirements and financial standards that must be met to qualify for a MassHealth coverage type. The rules of financial responsibility and calculation of financial eligibility are detailed in 130 CMR 506.000:

*Health Care Reform: MassHealth: Financial Requirements.* The MassHealth coverage types are:

- (1) MassHealth Standard – for people who are pregnant, children, parents and caretaker relatives, young adults, disabled individuals, certain persons who are HIV positive, individuals with breast or cervical cancer, independent foster care adolescents, Department of Mental Health (DMH) members, and medically frail as such term is defined in 130 CMR 505.008(F);
- (2) MassHealth CommonHealth – for disabled adults, disabled young adults, and disabled children who are not eligible for MassHealth Standard;
- (3) MassHealth CarePlus – for adults 21 through 64 years of age who are not eligible for MassHealth Standard;
- (4) MassHealth Family Assistance – for children, young adults, certain noncitizens, and persons who are HIV positive who are not eligible for MassHealth Standard, MassHealth CommonHealth, or MassHealth CarePlus;
- (5) MassHealth Limited – for certain lawfully present immigrants as described in 130 CMR 504.003(A): *Lawfully Present Immigrants*, nonqualified PRUCOLs, and other noncitizens as described in 130 CMR 504.003: *Immigrants*; and
- (6) MassHealth Medicare Savings Programs – for certain Medicare beneficiaries.

130 CMR 505.001(A).

In order to establish eligibility for MassHealth benefits, applicants must meet both the categorical and financial requirements. MassHealth determines financial eligibility based on an applicant's modified adjusted gross income. MassHealth takes the countable income, which includes earned income as described in 130 CMR 506.003(A) and unearned income described in 130 CMR 506.003(B) and subtracts deductions described in 130 CMR 506.003(D). 130 CMR 506.007. Per 130 CMR 506.003, the regulatory definitions of earned income, unearned income and deductions are as follows:

(A) Earned Income.

- (1) Earned income is the total amount of taxable compensation received for work or services performed less pretax deductions. Earned income may include wages, salaries, tips, commissions, and bonuses.
- (2) Earned taxable income for the self-employed is the total amount of taxable annual income from self-employment after deducting annual business expenses listed or allowable on a U.S. Individual Tax Return. Self-employment income may be a profit or a loss.
- (3) Earned income from S-Corporations or Partnerships is the total amount of taxable annual profit (or loss) after deducting business expenses listed or allowable on a U.S. Individual Tax Return.
- (4) Seasonal income or other reasonably predictable future income is taxable income derived from an income source that may fluctuate during the year.

Annual gross taxable income is divided by 12 to obtain a monthly taxable gross income with the following exception: if the applicant or member has a disabling illness or accident during or after the seasonal employment or other reasonably predictable future income period that prevents the person's continued or future employment, only current taxable income will be considered in the eligibility determination.

(B) Unearned Income.

(1) Unearned income is the total amount of taxable income that does not directly result from the individual's own labor after allowable deductions on the U.S Individual Tax Return.

(2) Unearned income may include, but is not limited to, social security benefits, railroad retirement benefits, pensions, annuities, certain trusts, interest and dividend income, state or local tax refund for a tax you deducted in the previous year, and gross gambling income.

(C) Rental Income. Rental income is the total amount of taxable income less any deductions listed or allowable on an applicant's or member's U.S. Individual Tax Return.

(D) Deductions. Under federal law, the following deductions are allowed when calculating MAGI countable income. Changes to federal law may impact the availability of these deductions:

- (1) educator expenses;
- (2) reservist/performance artist/fee-based government official expenses;
- (3) health savings account;
- (4) moving expenses, for the amount and populations allowed under federal law;
- (5) one-half self-employment tax;
- (6) self-employment retirement account;
- (7) penalty on early withdrawal of savings;
- (8) alimony paid to a former spouse for individuals with alimony agreements finalized on or before December 31, 2018. Alimony payments under separation or divorce agreements finalized after December 31, 2018, or pre-existing agreements modified after December 31, 2018, are not deductible;
- (9) individual retirement account (IRA);
- (10) student loan interest;
- (11) scholarships, awards, or fellowships used solely for educational purposes; and
- (12) other deductions described in the Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017, Public Law 115-97 for as long as those deductions are in effect under federal law.

An adult under the age of 65 is eligible for MassHealth's CarePlus benefit if they are not categorically eligible for MassHealth Standard (such as by pregnancy or disability) and their income at or below 133% of the FPL. 130 CMR 505.008(A)(2)(c). MassHealth determines monthly income by multiplying weekly income by 4.333. 130 CMR 506.007(A)(2)(c).

Here, Appellant's weekly income is \$450. Multiplied by 4.333, her monthly gross income is \$1,949. This is higher than the 133% limit to qualify for MassHealth CarePlus, or \$1,670. Accordingly, Appellant's income is too high for Appellant to be eligible for a MassHealth benefit. Appellant is eligible for a Health Connector plan. Appellant can direct any questions about Health Connector plans to 1-877-MA-ENROLL (1-877-623-6765), or inquiries concerning Health Safety Net to 877-910-2100.

This appeal is denied.

## **Order for MassHealth**

None.

## **Notification of Your Right to Appeal to Court**

If you disagree with this decision, you have the right to appeal to court in accordance with Chapter 30A of the Massachusetts General Laws. To appeal, you must file a complaint with the Superior Court for the county where you reside, or Suffolk County Superior Court, within 30 days of your receipt of this decision.

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Cynthia Kopka  
Hearing Officer  
Board of Hearings

MassHealth Representative: Nga Tran, Charlestown MassHealth Enrollment Center, 529 Main Street, Suite 1M, Charlestown, MA 02129