

Reasons for Decision:

Order # 1516-240

The appellant appealed that funds for a monthly bus pass have been removed from the appellant's income assistance budget.

The appellant had been in receipt of a health bus pass which was due to expire <date removed>. The worker sent the appellant a letter advising the appellant that the appellant would need to obtain updated documentation regarding the number of medical related appointments that the appellant had in one month. During a telephone conversation on <date removed> the appellant indicated that the appellant would not be providing this update as the appellant only had one confirmed medical appointment each month. The worker advised that when there are not enough medical appointments to justify the addition of a bus pass, the program can provide bus tickets to attend single appointments.

At the hearing the appellant stated that the appellant required a bus pass in order to maintain independence in the community. Without the bus pass the appellant is forced to stay close to home, and to ask others for assistance. The appellant stated that the loss of the bus pass has caused the appellant a great deal of distress and anxiety. The appellant feels strongly that the need to maintain independence in the community should be enough justification to issue the appellant a monthly bus pass.

After carefully considering the written and verbal information the Board has determined that the Employment and Income Assistance Program has correctly determined that the appellant does not meet the eligibility criteria for a monthly bus pass.

The Manitoba Assistance Regulation Schedule A, division 3, Section 9, Health Care Expenses specifies that:

emergency transportation and other expenses as may be authorized by the director and which, in the director's opinion, are necessary to provide the care, treatment or attention required.

The Department has interpreted this regulation and created a policy that allows for transportation to all medical appointments, not just emergency transportation. Eligibility for transportation costs is not determined by the severity of a person's medical condition, or their mobility issues, but strictly by the number of appointments that a person has. As the appellant has not provided confirmation of any regularly occurring appointments, or an estimation of the number of appointments that the appellant has, the Board agrees that the Department does not have any justification for adding a health transportation allowance to the appellant's budget. Therefore the decision of the Director has been confirmed.