

Reasons for Decision:

Order # AP1718-0151

The appellant appealed that the Employment and Income Assistance Program will not pay for the remaining cost of his dentures.

The appellant was on income assistance from <date removed> to <date removed>. During this period, the program had received a request to cover the cost of extractions in <date removed>, but did not receive any further requests for any dental or denturist coverage.

The appellant's case was closed in <date removed> when the program received a tape match from Employment Insurance advising that the appellant was in receipt of Employment Insurance benefits. The program closed their file due to sufficient income. The program also needed to explore how the appellant became eligible for Employment Insurance as they had not advised they were working or declared any earnings to the program.

The appellant reapplied for assistance in <date removed>. At that time they had made an inquiry with Employment and Income Assistance about whether they could help pay the amount they owed so they could obtain the dentures. When the appellant was working, they had ordered a set of dentures. The appellant had health insurance from their employer, and <reference removed> paid for half the cost of their dentures. The appellant still owed <amount removed> toward the cost of their dentures.

The request to cover the remaining cost of the dentures was forwarded to the Health Services Dental Branch. The request was reviewed and denied because there was no pre-approval and authorization for the cost of the dentures at the time the cost was incurred. At the time the request for payment was made to Employment and Income Assistance, this was considered a debt, and the Employment and Income Assistance program does not pay debts on behalf of income assistance recipients.

At the hearing the appellant stated that they have been living without any teeth for nine months and this is having a very negative effect on their health and wellbeing. The appellant brought letters of support to the hearing attesting to their inability to eat properly without teeth.

The appellant stated that their ability to talk has been affected, their presentation to potential employers, and their overall mood have all been affected because of their lack of teeth. The appellant stated that when they ordered their teeth, their intention

was to pay for half of the dentures with their earnings, but they then lost their job and was having difficulty making ends meet on Employment Insurance. The appellant stated they had an addiction problem which they are currently addressing. The appellant stated they know they "messed up", but getting their teeth is an absolute necessity, and they have no means of doing that unless EIA pays for them.

After carefully considering the written and verbal information the Board has determined that the appellant does not meet the eligibility criteria to have the outstanding balance paid for their dentures. Unfortunately the appellant did not seek pre-authorization to have their dentures covered while they were enrolled on the income assistance program. At the time of the appellant's re-enrolment on income assistance the outstanding balance was a debt the appellant owed, and the program cannot pay for debts under any circumstances. Therefore, the decision of the Director on this issue has been confirmed.

At this point the appellant's options are to either make payment plan arrangements with the dentist, or to begin the pre-authorization process for a new set of dentures through the proper channels with Employment and Income Assistance.

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