

**BEFORE THE ALASKA OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS ON REFERRAL
BY THE COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

In the Matter of)
)
 N B)
_____)

OAH No. 15-0655-MDX

DECISION

I. Introduction

N B is a Medicaid recipient. Ms. B was in Anchorage for medical treatment. When Ms. B needed to return to her home, her medical provider requested prior approval for her daughter to travel with her as an escort. The Division of Health Care Services (Division) denied the request. Ms. B requested a hearing to challenge the denial.

Ms. B's hearing was held on July 20, 2015. Ms. B represented herself. Angela Ybarra, a Medical Assistance Administrator with the Division, represented the Division. Carrie Truett, a Medical Assistance Administrator employed by the Division, testified on the Division's behalf.

The evidence shows that Ms. B's medical provider did not provide the Division with medical justification for her daughter to travel with her as a medical escort. The Division's decision denying prior authorization is affirmed.

II. Facts

The following facts were established by a preponderance of the evidence.

Ms. B was medivacked from her home in rural Alaska to the Facility X in Anchorage. Her daughter accompanied her on the medevac flight.¹ On April 23, 2015, when it came time for Ms. B to return to her home, Facility X requested that Medicaid pay for her daughter's return flight home with her mother. The request was made by telephone and the reason provided was "house supervisor approved."²

The Division denied the request for travel authorization for Ms. B's daughter on the basis that there was no medical necessity for her to accompany Ms. B as an escort. Both Ms. B and her daughter returned home. Medicaid did not pay for the daughter's return trip.³ Ms. B did not

¹ Ms. B's testimony.

² Ms. Truett's testimony; Ex. E, p. 1.

³ Ms. Truett's testimony; Ex. E, p. 1.

pay for her daughter's return trip. She has not received a bill for the trip. She does not know who paid for her daughter's return trip.⁴

III. Discussion

The Alaska Medicaid program will pay for medically necessary transportation for a Medicaid recipient. Unless the transportation is for a medical emergency, the transportation must be requested by a medical provider and approved in advance.⁵ The Medicaid program will, if medically necessary, pay for an escort to accompany an adult Medicaid recipient.⁶

Although Ms. B's hearing request states that her daughter needed to accompany her because Ms. B was not able to lift anything, that information was not given to Medicaid by Facility X as part of the travel request. Instead, Facility X only stated that the daughter's travel had been approved by a "house supervisor." This is not medical justification. Given the lack of medical justification, the Division correctly determined that Ms. B's daughter's travel request should be denied.⁷ It should be noted that Ms. B has not suffered any damage: her daughter was able to return home without Ms. B paying for the flight, and no one has billed Ms. B for the cost of the flight.

V. Conclusion

The Division's decision to deny Ms. B's prior authorization request for travel for her daughter is affirmed.

DATED this 17th day of August, 2015.

Signed

Lawrence A. Pederson
Administrative Law Judge

⁴ Ms. B's testimony.

⁵ 7 AAC 120.410.

⁶ 7 AAC 120.430.

⁷ This conclusion would have been different if Ms. B's daughter had been originally approved by Medicaid to fly to Anchorage with her. In that case, the Medicaid program would necessarily need to return the daughter home, since it had approved her travel from home. However, as explained by Ms. B, her daughter came with her on the medevac flight because there was room on the plane, *i.e.*, Medicaid approval for the daughter's travel to Anchorage was not requested nor received.

Adoption

The undersigned, by delegation from of the Commissioner of Health and Social Services, adopts this Decision, under the authority of AS 44.64.060(e)(1), as the final administrative determination in this matter.

Judicial review of this decision may be obtained by filing an appeal in the Alaska Superior Court in accordance with Alaska R. App. P. 602(a)(2) within 30 days after the date of this decision.

DATED this 1st day of September, 2015.

By: Signed _____
Name: Christopher M. Kennedy
Title: Deputy Chief Administrative Law Judge

[This document has been modified to conform to the technical standards for publication.]