

OASIS · AT A GLANCE

Appeals, grievances, and fair hearings (MDHHS/PIHP denials)

A denial letter looks final. It isn't. Michigan gives you a real, structured path to challenge it, with a clock that starts the moment the letter arrives.

BY JIM PALASTY · 11 MIN READ · THE 90-DAY CLOCK THAT STARTS THE MOMENT THE LETTER ARRIVES

90

DAYS TO FILE A FAIR HEARING REQUEST AFTER A DENIAL NOTICE

Michigan's fair hearing deadline is 90 days from the denial notice. Requesting a hearing within 10 days can preserve your current services while the appeal is pending. Both clocks matter.

How it works

THREE STEPS

STEP 1

The denial letter arrives

A service reduction or denial notice starts two separate clocks: one for filing, one for preserving current services.



STEP 2

Multiple appeal levels exist

Informal grievance through CMH patient rights, PIHP-level appeal, and MDHHS fair hearing each serve a different stage.



STEP 3

Evidence and timing both matter

A well-documented appeal filed within the right window has a real chance. A late or undocumented one usually doesn't.

The Michigan appeals ladder

1. Informal grievance	Through CMH patient rights, fastest but least formal
2. PIHP-level appeal	Regional escalation above the CMH
3. MDHHS fair hearing	Formal administrative hearing, 90-day deadline
4. Aid pending request	File within 10 days to preserve current services
5. Court appeal	For legal rights violations beyond the administrative process

THE HEARING REQUEST FILED ON DAY NINE

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Yolanda's son received a notice reducing his CLS hours by a third, with the change scheduled to take effect in two weeks. She filed a fair hearing request through MI Bridges on day nine, one day inside the aid pending window, specifically to keep his existing hours in place while the case was reviewed. The hearing took two months to resolve. His hours never actually dropped in the meantime, because she'd hit the window that mattered most.

ONE DAY INSIDE A TEN-DAY WINDOW KEPT HER SON'S HOURS INTACT FOR TWO MONTHS WHILE THE SYSTEM CAUGHT UP.

What matters, at a glance

MICHIGAN SPECIFIC

Three levels of appeal

Informal CMH grievance, PIHP-level appeal, and MDHHS fair hearing each represent a real, distinct escalation point.

90-day filing deadline

The fair hearing request must be filed within 90 days of the denial notice. This deadline is firm.

10-day window for aid pending

Requesting a hearing within 10 days can keep your current services in place while the appeal is decided. Miss it, and services may change first.

File through MI Bridges

Fair hearing requests can be submitted online through the MI Bridges system, by mail, or by phone.

Evidence strengthens appeals

Documentation of need, prior service levels, and specific impact all matter more than general disagreement with the decision.

Not everything is appealable

Understanding what can and cannot be appealed prevents wasted time on the wrong process.

BRING THESE · CHECK AS YOU GO

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| ☐ The original denial or reduction notice, with the date received | ☐ Documentation of prior service levels and specific need |
| ☐ Your MI Bridges account information for online filing | ☐ A written timeline of the situation leading to the denial |
| ☐ Contact information for MPAS or legal aid if the case is complex | |

YOUR MOVE

When you receive a denial or reduction notice, here is what to do

- 1 Read the denial notice carefully for the specific reason given.
- 2 File an informal grievance through CMH patient rights if appropriate.
- 3 Request a fair hearing through MI Bridges within 10 days for aid pending.
- 4 Gather documentation supporting your family member's need.
- 5 File formally within the 90-day deadline regardless of the 10-day window.
- 6 Prepare specific evidence and a clear statement for the hearing itself.

Two deadlines run from the same letter. Ninety days to file. Ten days to keep your current services while you're heard. Both matter.

APPEALS AND FAIR HEARING RESOURCES

Fair hearing requests can be filed online through MI Bridges (michigan.gov/mibridges), by mail, or by phone, within 90 days of a denial notice.

The National Health Law Program (healthlaw.org) and Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law (bazelon.org) both offer guidance on Medicaid appeals and fair hearing preparation.

Informational only. Not legal or medical advice. Verify current program rules before acting.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Jim Palasty is the founder of OASIS for Autism and a single father of an adult autistic daughter in Michigan.