

Reasons for Decision:

Order # AP1516-0186

The appellant appealed that the appellant's request for a <specialized mobility device> was denied.

The appellant is non-verbal and attended the hearing with a respite worker and the appellant's parent <name removed> who presented on the appellant's behalf.

The appellant's parent reported at the hearing that the appellant is <reference removed> old and is totally dependent on another person for all the appellant's needs. The appellant has been using a <specialized mobility device> for mobility for the past twenty-three years and is in need of a replacement. The occupational therapist suggested the <specialized mobility device> for the appellant as it folds up easily, is light weight, it is easy to use in the home and on outings. It has adjustable components that can accommodate the appellant's needs and provide comfort. The appellant's parent advised that it has provided the appellant and the caregivers a large reduction in the amount of heavy lifting required as opposed to using a wheelchair. The appellant's parent stated that the appellant doesn't like a wheelchair as it is heavy and more difficult to manoeuvre in the home. The respite worker advised that the appellant's feet don't fit on the stands anymore of the <specialized mobility device> and the appellant now needs pillows for proper head support. The appellant's parent and the respite worker stated that the wheelchair is too awkward and heavy and the <specialized mobility device> is best for everyone, the appellant, the appellant's parent and the care providers.

The Department reported at the hearing that on <reference removed> the occupational therapist submitted a written request for funding approval to the Department's Disability and Health Supports Unit (DHSU). The DHSU determined that the <specialized mobility device> is not a fundable item through Employment and Income Assistance. A denial letter was sent on <reference removed> explaining that mobility devices are funded through the Manitoba Wheelchair Program. The Department followed up with a phone call to the occupational therapist who agreed that the appellant's needs could be addressed with a wheelchair with some modifications. The Department has no information from the Manitoba Wheelchair Association advising that there is nothing else that would meet the appellant's needs except the <specialized mobility device>, therefore the request was denied.

After carefully considering the written and verbal information presented at the hearing the Board has determined that the Department has correctly administered the appellant's request for a <specialized mobility device>. The appellant's parent did not pursue or request the occupational therapist to conduct an assessment on the

suitability of a wheelchair. The assessment was only completed on the cruiser as that is what was requested by the parent. When the Department asked the occupational therapist if a wheelchair would meet the needs of the appellant, the therapist confirmed yes.

The Board has determined that there is insufficient information to overturn the decision of the Department due to the lack of an occupational therapist assessment on a wheelchair. The Board recognizes the preference of the <specialized mobility device> for quality of life to be maintained, however there was not enough information to confirm that the <specialized mobility device> is the better option. The Board recognizes that the family is comfortable with the <specialized mobility device> as it has been used for twenty three years, however there was reluctance on the parent's part to even consider the wheelchair options. Therefore, the Board confirms the decision of the Director and the appeal is dismissed.

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