

STATE OF MICHIGAN
STATE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

IN THE MATTER OF: [REDACTED],
Claimant

Reg. No.: 2007-14324
Issue No.: 2009; 4031
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Load No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date:
February 27, 2008
Wayne County DHS (41)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Judith Ralston Ellison

HEARING DECISION

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9; and MCL 400.37 upon Claimant's request for a hearing. After due notice, the Claimant and his [REDACTED] appeared at a hearing held on February 27, 2008 at the Department of Human Service (Department) in Wayne County.

The record was left open to obtain additional medical information; and an Interim Order was issued for additional new medical evidence. No new evidence was received; and the record closed. The matter is now before the undersigned for a final decision.

ISSUES

Whether the Department properly determined the Claimant is "not disabled" for purposes of Medical Assistance based on disability (MA-P), and State Disability Assistance (SDA) programs?

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the competent, material and substantial evidence on the whole record, finds as material fact:

- (1) On September 11, 2006 the Claimant applied for MA-P and SDA.
- (2) On January 12, 2007 the Department denied the application; and on May 21, 2007 the SHRT denied the application finding the impairment lacked duration per 20 CFR 416.909.
- (3) On February 1, 2007 the Claimant filed a timely hearing request protesting the determination of the Department.
- (4) Claimant's date of birth is [REDACTED]; and the Claimant is forty-eight years of age.
- (5) Claimant completed grade 12; a BA; and can read and write English and perform basic math.
- (6) Claimant last worked in January 2007 part-time for one-half a day to June 2007 as a teacher, helper in heating/cooling.
- (7) Claimant has alleged a medical history of a colostomy in August 2006, hospital infection and reversal of the colostomy August 2007, hypertension and diabetes mellitus Type II.
- (8) September 2006, in part:

To ER with abdominal pain. FINAL DIAGNOSIS: Diverticulitis of colon. Secondary: abscess of intestine, candidiasis of mouth, essential hypertension. Procedures: Sigmoidectomy. Temporary colostomy. Incision of large intestine by laparotomy. Discharged with [REDACTED] to follow regular diet; no sports, strenuous activity or lifting over 10 pounds or to work for next several weeks until doctor tells you. [REDACTED]. Department Exhibit (DE) 2, pp/ 8A-79A.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Medical Assistance (MA) program is established by Title XIX of the Social Security Act and is implemented by Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The Department of Human Services (DHS or department) administers the MA program pursuant to MCL 400.1 *et*

seq., and MCL 400.105. Department policies are found in the Program Administrative Manual (PAM), the Program Eligibility Manual (PEM) and the Program Reference Manual (PRM).

Federal regulations require that the department use the same operative definition for “disabled” as used for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) under Title XVI of the Social Security Act. 42 CFR 435.540(a)

“Disability” is:

. . . the inability to do any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months . . . 20 CFR416.905

In determining whether an individual is disabled, 20 CFR 416.920 requires the trier of fact to follow a sequential evaluation process by which current work activity; the severity of impairment(s); residual functional capacity, and vocational factors (i.e., age, education, and work experience) are assessed in that order. A determination that an individual is disabled can be made at any step in the sequential evaluation. Then evaluation under a subsequent step is not necessary.

First, the trier of fact must determine if the individual is working and if the work is SGA. 20 CFR 416.920(b) In this case, under the first step, Claimant testified to performing SGA as a substitute teacher beginning January until June 2007; and earning wages of [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] per month; and then not earning wages until November 2007. The amount of wages earned per month, [REDACTED], do not meet the SGA requirement for 2007 of [REDACTED] per month. Therefore, the Claimant is not disqualified from MA at step one in the evaluation process.

Second, in order to be considered disabled for purposes of MA, a person must have a “severe impairment” 20 CFR 416.920(c). A severe impairment is an impairment which

significantly limits an individual's physical or mental ability to perform basic work activities.

Basic work activities mean the abilities and aptitudes necessary to do most jobs. Examples include:

- (1) Physical functions such as walking, standing, sitting, lifting, pushing, pulling, reaching, carrying or handling;
- (2) Capacities for seeing, hearing and speaking;
- (3) Understanding, carrying out, and remembering simple instructions.
- (4) Use of judgment;
- (5) Responding appropriately to supervision, co-workers and usual work situations; and
- (6) Dealing with changes in a routine work setting. 20 CFR 416.921(b)

The purpose of the second step in the sequential evaluation process is to screen out claims lacking in medical merit. The court in *Salmi v Sec'y of Health and Human Servs*, 774 F2d 685 (6th Cir 1985) held that an impairment qualifies as "non-severe" only if it "would not affect the claimant's ability to work," "regardless of the claimant's age, education, or prior work experience." *Id.* At 691-92. Only slight abnormalities that minimally affect a claimant's ability to work can be considered non-severe. *Higgs v Bowen*, 880 F2d 860, 862 (6th Cir. 1988); *Farris v Sec'y of Health & Human Servs*, 773 F2d 85, 90 (6thCir 1985).

In this case, the Claimant has presented sufficient medical evidence to support a finding that Claimant has more than minimal physical limitations that would effect abilities to perform basic work activities more than minimally. See finding of fact 8.

In the third step of the sequential analysis of a disability claim, the trier of fact must determine if the Claimant's impairment is listed in Appendix 1 of Subpart P of 20 CFR, Part 404. Based on the hearing record, the undersigned finds that the Claimant's medical record will not

support findings that the Claimant's impairments are "listed impairment(s)" or equal to a listed impairment. 20 CFR 416.920(a) (4) (iii) According to the medical evidence, alone, the Claimant cannot be found to be disabled.

Appendix I, Listing of Impairments (Listing) discusses the analysis and criteria necessary to a finding of a listed impairment. Listing 5.00 *Digestive System*. The only medical records submitted for review were for the time period September 2006. The only other evidence was testimony at hearing. The Claimant testified that the September 2006 colostomy was reversed August 2007. Without additional medical records a determination of whether the intent or severity of Listing 5.00 cannot be made.

In this case, this Administrative Law Judge finds the Claimant is not disabled at the third step for purposes of the Medical Assistance (MA) program due to the lack of medical records. Sequential evaluation under step four or five is necessary. 20 CFR 416.905

In the fourth step of the sequential evaluation of a disability claim, the trier of fact must determine if the Claimant's impairment(s) prevents Claimant from doing past relevant work. 20 CFR 416.920(e). Residual functional capacity (RFC) will be assessed based on impairment(s), and any related symptoms, such as pain, which may cause physical and mental limitations that affect what you can do in a work setting. RFC is the most you can still do despite your limitations. All the relevant medical and other evidence in your case record applies in the assessment. See 20 CFR 416.945.

Claimant's past relevant work was teaching on a part-time basis as of February 2008. At hearing, the Claimant testified that part-time teaching was all he could do because of problems with his colostomy. But the Claimant testified to colostomy reversal in August 2007; less than twelve months after the September 2007 surgery. At hearing the Claimant testified to a weight

gain from a previous low. Weight loss is an indicator to malnourished status and recovery due to the colostomy reversal. Therefore, the undersigned agrees with SHRT and finds the evidence support the Claimant's impairment has not met the duration period of 20 CFR 416.909. The undersigned decides the Claimant can return to past relevant work full time as a teacher. Arguendo, the Claimant is not disabled under step five.

In the fifth step of the sequential evaluation of a disability claim, the trier of fact must determine: if the Claimant's impairment(s) prevent him/her from doing other work. 20 CFR 416.920(f). This determination is based on the claimant's:

- (1) "Residual function capacity," defined simply as "what you can still do despite your limitations," 20 CFR 416.945.
- (2) Age, education and work experience, and
- (3) The kinds of work which exist in significant numbers in the national economy which the claimant could perform despite his/her impairments.

20 CFR 416.960. *Felton v DSS*, 161 Mich App 690, 696-697, 411 NW2d 829 (1987).

It is the finding of the undersigned, based upon the medical evidence, objective physical findings, and hearing record that Claimant's RFC for work activities on a regular and continuing basis is functionally limited by impairments to sedentary work.

The Claimant is evaluated under Appendix 2 to Subpart P of Part 404—Medical-Vocational Guidelines: 20 CFR 416.967(a), *sedentary work*:

Sedentary work. Sedentary work involves lifting no more than 10 pounds at a time and occasionally lifting or carrying articles like docket files, ledgers, and small tools. Although a sedentary job is defined as one which involves sitting, a certain amount of walking and standing is often necessary in carrying out job duties. Jobs are sedentary if walking and standing are required occasionally and other sedentary criteria are met.

Claimant at forty-eight is considered a *younger individual*; a category of individuals in age group 45-49 when age is a lesser advantage factor for making adjustment to other work; Rule 201.21; education: high school graduate or more; previous work experience: skilled or semiskilled—skills not transferable; Claimant is “not disabled” per Rule 201.21.

It is the finding of the undersigned, based upon the medical data and hearing record that Claimant is “not disabled” at the fifth step.

The State Disability Assistance (SDA) program which provides financial assistance for disabled persons is established by 1939 PA 280, as amended. The Department of Human Services (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers the SDA program pursuant to MCL 400.1 et seq., and MAC R 400.3151-400.3180. Department policies are found in the Program Administrative Manual (PAM), the Program Eligibility Manual (PEM) and the Program Reference Manual (PRM).

A person is considered disabled for purposes of SDA if the person has a physical or mental impairment which meets federal SSI disability standards for at least ninety days. Receipt of SSI or RSDI benefits based on disability or blindness or the receipt of MA benefits based on disability or blindness (MA-P) automatically qualifies an individual as disabled for purposes of the SDA program. Other specific financial and non-financial eligibility criteria are found in PEM 261.

In this case, there is insufficient evidence to support a finding that Claimant’s impairments meet the disability requirements under SSI disability standards or prevent other sedentary work for ninety days. This Administrative Law Judge finds the Claimant is “not disabled” for purposes of the SDA program.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based on the findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the Claimant is “not disabled” for purposes of the Medical Assistance program and State Disability Assistance.

It is ORDERED; the Department’s determination in this matter is AFFIRMED.

Judith Ralston Ellison
Administrative Law Judge
For Ishmael Ahmed, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: _____

Date Mailed: _____

NOTICE: Administrative Hearings may order a rehearing or reconsideration on either its own motion or at the request of a party within 30 days of the mailing date of this Decision and Order. Administrative Hearings will not order a rehearing or reconsideration on the Department’s motion where the final decision cannot be implemented within 90 days of the filing of the original request.

The Claimant may appeal the Decision and Order to Circuit Court within 30 days of the receipt of the Decision and Order or, if a timely request for rehearing was made, within 30 days of the receipt date of the rehearing decision.

JRE/jlg

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