

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: 2008-22997

Issue No: 2009; 4031

Case No: [REDACTED]

Load No: [REDACTED]

Hearing Date:

August 26, 2008

Clinton County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Carmen G. Fahie

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, a telephone hearing was held on Tuesday, August 26, 2008. The claimant personally appeared and testified with her boyfriend [REDACTED] and son [REDACTED] as witnesses.

ISSUE

Did the department properly deny the claimant's application for Medical Assistance (MA-P) and State Disability Assistance (SDA)?

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 April 24, 2007, the claimant applied for MA-P and SDA without filing an application for retroactive MA-P.

(2) On May 15, 2008, the Medical Review Team (MRT) denied the claimant's application for MA-P stating that the claimant was capable of performing other work under Medical-Vocational Grid Rule 202.20 per 20 CFR 416.920(f) and for SDA that the claimant's physical and mental impairment does not prevent employment for 90 days or more.

(3) On May 21, 2008, the department caseworker sent the claimant a notice that her application was denied.

(4) On May 28, 2008, the department received a hearing request from the claimant, contesting the department's negative action.

(5) On June 25, 2008, the State Hearing Review Team (SHRT) considered the submitted objective medical evidence in making its determination of MA-P, retroactive MA-P, and SDA eligibility for the claimant. The SHRT report reads in part:

The claimant is alleging disability due to depression, borderline personality disorder, anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder, and dissociative disorder. The claimant is 44 years old and has a high school education with a history of unskilled work. The claimant did not meet applicable Social Security listings 12.03, 12.04, 12.06, and 12.08. The claimant is capable of performing other work that is unskilled work per 20 CFR 416.968(a) under Vocational Rule 204.00.

(6) During the hearing on August 26, 2008, the claimant requested permission to submit additional medical information that needed to be reviewed by SHRT. Additional medical information was received from the local office on December 23, 2008 and forwarded to SHRT for review on December 23, 2008.

(7) On January 2, 2009, the SHRT considered the newly submitted objective medical evidence in making its determination of MA-P, retroactive MA-P, and SDA. The SHRT report reads in part:

The claimant is alleging disability due to depression, borderline personality disorder, anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder, and dissociative disorder. She is 44 years old and has a high school education with a history of unskilled work. The claimant did not meet applicable Social Security listings 12.03, 12.04, 12.06, and 12.08. The claimant is capable of performing other work that is unskilled work per 20 CFR 416.968(a) under Vocational Rule 204.00.

Giving the benefit of a doubt and combining her physical impairments, she should avoid heavy lifting and constant stooping and crouching.

(8) The claimant is a 45 year-old woman whose date of birth is [REDACTED].

The claimant is 5' 7" tall and weighs 199 pounds. The claimant has gained 40 pounds in the past year, but does not know why. The claimant has a high school diploma and two years of college.

The claimant can read and write and do basic math. The claimant was last employed as a clerk/pharmacy assistant on March 17, 2007 for five months. The claimant had previously been a cashier for four months, secretary for four months, waitress for one month, and unit coordinator for seven years. The claimant stayed home with her kids from 1996 to 2003.

(9) The claimant's alleged impairments are depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder, coronary artery disease, deep vein thrombosis, fibromyalgia, borderline personality disorder, and dissociative disorder.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The State Disability Assistance (SDA) program which provides financial assistance for disabled persons is established by 2004 PA 344. The Department of Human Services (DHS or department) administers the SDA program pursuant to MCL 400.10, *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).

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 400.10, *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).

"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 CFR 416.905.

...We follow a set order to determine whether you are disabled. We review any current work activity, the severity of your impairment(s), your residual functional capacity, your past work, and your age, education and work experience. If we can find that you are disabled or not disabled at any point in the review, we do not review your claim further.... 20 CFR 416.920.

...If you are working and the work you are doing is substantial gainful activity, we will find that you are not disabled regardless of your medical condition or your age, education, and work experience. 20 CFR 416.920(b).

...[The impairment]...must have lasted or must be expected to last for a continuous period of at least 12 months. We call this the duration requirement. 20 CFR 416.909.

...If you do not have any impairment or combination of impairments which significantly limits your physical or mental ability to do basic work activities, we will find that you do not have a severe impairment and are, therefore, not disabled. We will not consider your age, education, and work experience. 20 CFR 416.920(c).

[In reviewing your impairment]...We need reports about your impairments from acceptable medical sources.... 20 CFR 416.913(a).

...Statements about your pain or other symptoms will not alone establish that you are disabled; there must be medical signs and laboratory findings which show that you have a medical impairment.... 20 CFR 416.929(a).

...You must provide medical evidence showing that you have an impairment(s) and how severe it is during the time you say that you are disabled. 20 CFR 416.912(c).

... [The record must show a severe impairment] which significantly limits your physical or mental ability to do basic work activities.... 20 CFR 416.920(c).

...Medical reports should include --

- (1) Medical history.
- (2) Clinical findings (such as the results of physical or mental status examinations);
- (3) Laboratory findings (such as blood pressure, X-rays);
- (4) Diagnosis (statement of disease or injury based on its signs and symptoms).... 20 CFR 416.913(b).

...The medical evidence...must be complete and detailed enough to allow us to make a determination about whether you are disabled or blind. 20 CFR 416.913(d).

Medical findings consist of symptoms, signs, and laboratory findings:

- (a) **Symptoms** are your own description of your physical or mental impairment. Your statements alone are not enough to establish that there is a physical or mental impairment.
- (b) **Signs** are anatomical, physiological, or psychological abnormalities which can be observed, apart from your statements (symptoms). Signs must be shown by medically acceptable clinical diagnostic techniques. Psychiatric signs are medically demonstrable phenomena which indicate specific psychological abnormalities e.g., abnormalities of behavior, mood, thought, memory, orientation, development, or perception. They must also be shown by observable facts that can be medically described and evaluated.
- (c) **Laboratory findings** are anatomical, physiological, or psychological phenomena which can be shown by the use of a medically acceptable laboratory diagnostic techniques.

Some of these diagnostic techniques include chemical tests, electrophysiological studies (electrocardiogram, electroencephalogram, etc.), roentgenological studies (X-rays), and psychological tests. 20 CFR 416.928.

It must allow us to determine --

- (1) The nature and limiting effects of your impairment(s) for any period in question;
- (2) The probable duration of your impairment; and
- (3) Your residual functional capacity to do work-related physical and mental activities. 20 CFR 416.913(d).

Information from other sources may also help us to understand how your impairment(s) affects your ability to work. 20 CFR 416.913(e).

...You can only be found disabled if you are unable 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. See 20 CFR 416.905. Your impairment must result from anatomical, physiological, or psychological abnormalities which are demonstrable by medically acceptable clinical and laboratory diagnostic techniques.... 20 CFR 416.927(a)(1).

...Evidence that you submit or that we obtain may contain medical opinions. Medical opinions are statements from physicians and psychologists or other acceptable medical sources that reflect judgments about the nature and severity of your impairment(s), including your symptoms, diagnosis and prognosis, what you can still do despite impairment(s), and your physical or mental restrictions. 20 CFR 416.927(a)(2).

...In deciding whether you are disabled, we will always consider the medical opinions in your case record together with the rest of the relevant evidence we receive. 20 CFR 416.927(b).

After we review all of the evidence relevant to your claim, including medical opinions, we make findings about what the evidence shows. 20 CFR 416.927(c).

...If all of the evidence we receive, including all medical opinion(s), is consistent, and there is sufficient evidence for us to decide whether you are disabled, we will make our determination or decision based on that evidence. 20 CFR 416.927(c)(1).

...If any of the evidence in your case record, including any medical opinion(s), is inconsistent with other evidence or is internally inconsistent, we will weigh all of the evidence and see whether we can decide whether you are disabled based on the evidence we have. 20 CFR 416.927(c)(2).

[As Judge]...We are responsible for making the determination or decision about whether you meet the statutory definition of disability. In so doing, we review all of the medical findings and other evidence that support a medical source's statement that you are disabled.... 20 CFR 416.927(e).

...A statement by a medical source that you are "disabled" or "unable to work" does not mean that we will determine that you are disabled. 20 CFR 416.927(e).

...If you have an impairment(s) which meets the duration requirement and is listed in Appendix 1 or is equal to a listed impairment(s), we will find you disabled without considering your age, education, and work experience. 20 CFR 416.920(d).

...If we cannot make a decision on your current work activities or medical facts alone and you have a severe impairment, we will then review your residual functional capacity and the physical and mental demands of the work you have done in the past. If you can still do this kind of work, we will find that you are not disabled. 20 CFR 416.920(e).

If you cannot do any work you have done in the past because you have a severe impairment(s), we will consider your residual functional capacity and your age, education, and past work experience to see if you can do other work. If you cannot, we will find you disabled. 20 CFR 416.920(f)(1).

...Your residual functional capacity is what you can still do despite limitations. If you have more than one impairment, we will consider all of your impairment(s) of which we are aware. We will consider your ability to meet certain demands of jobs, such as physical demands, mental demands, sensory requirements, and other functions, as described in paragraphs (b), (c) and (d) of this

section. Residual functional capacity is an assessment based on all of the relevant evidence.... 20 CFR 416.945(a).

...This assessment of your remaining capacity for work is not a decision on whether you are disabled, but is used as the basis for determining the particular types of work you may be able to do despite your impairment(s).... 20 CFR 416.945(a).

...In determining whether you are disabled, we will consider all of your symptoms, including pain, and the extent to which your symptoms can reasonably be accepted as consistent with objective medical evidence, and other evidence.... 20 CFR 416.929(a).

...In evaluating the intensity and persistence of your symptoms, including pain, we will consider all of the available evidence, including your medical history, the medical signs and laboratory findings and statements about how your symptoms affect you... We will then determine the extent to which your alleged functional limitations or restrictions due to pain or other symptoms can reasonably be accepted as consistent with the medical signs and laboratory findings and other evidence to decide how your symptoms affect your ability to work.... 20 CFR 416.929(a).

If you have more than one impairment, we will consider all of your impairments of which we are aware. We will consider your ability to meet certain demands of jobs, such as physical demands, mental demands, sensory requirements, and other functions as described in paragraphs (b), (c) and (d) of this section. Residual functional capacity is an assessment based upon all of the relevant evidence. This assessment of your capacity for work is not a decision on whether you are disabled but is used as a basis for determining the particular types of work you may be able to do despite your impairment. 20 CFR 416.945.

...When we assess your physical abilities, we first assess the nature and extent of your physical limitations and then determine your residual functional capacity for work activity on a regular and continuing basis. A limited ability to perform certain physical demands of work activity, such as sitting, standing, walking, lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, or other physical functions (including manipulative or postural functions, such as reaching, handling, stooping or crouching), may reduce your ability to do past work and other work. 20 CFR 416.945(b).

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 CFR 416.905

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 the impairment(s), residual functional capacity, and vocational factors (i.e., age, education, and work experience) are assessed in that order. When a determination that an individual is or is not disabled can be made at any step in the sequential evaluation, 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 substantial gainful activity. 20 CFR 416.920(b). At Step 1, the claimant is not engaged in substantial gainful activity and has not worked since March 17, 2007. Therefore, the claimant is not disqualified from receiving disability at Step 1.

Secondly, 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 means the abilities and aptitudes necessary to do most jobs. Examples of these 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. *Higgs v. Bowen* 880 F2d 860, 862 (6th Cir, 1988). As a result, the department may only screen out claims at this level which are “totally groundless” solely from a medical standpoint. The *Higgs* court used the severity requirement as a “*de minimus* hurdle” in the disability determination. The *de minimus* standard is a provision of a law that allows the court to disregard trifling matters.

The objective medical evidence on the record further substantiates the following:

On [REDACTED] the claimant underwent a venous ultrasound at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for bilateral leg pain with edema for the past three years. In the right leg there were numerous areas of venous wall thickening and irregular, non-laminar flow imaged throughout the deep venous system suggestive of chronic thrombus. In the left leg, there were multiple areas of venous wall thickening and irregular non-laminar flow suggestive of chronic thrombus. There was left tib-peroneal and peroneal veins were especially difficult to fully compress and may have more acute or sub-acute thrombus. The radiologist’s impression was abnormal venous appearance bilaterally suggestive of chronic thrombus in the deep veins.

On [REDACTED], the claimant's treating physician completed a Medical Examination Report, DHS-49, for the claimant. The claimant was first examined on [REDACTED] and last examined on [REDACTED]. The claimant had a history of impairment and chief complaint of chronic pain, high blood pressure, edema, tachycardia, depression, anxiety, and fibromyalgia. The claimant's current diagnosis was depression, anxiety, edema, tachycardia, chronic pain, fibromyalgia, nocturnal desaturation, leg pain, and increase PTH. The claimant's blood pressure was slightly elevated at 116/94. The claimant's physical examination was within normal ranges with the exception of the claimant reporting low back pain and left extremity pain. The claimant had desaturation at night where she has to take oxygen at night. The claimant has palpitations, high blood pressure, edema, and tachycardia. The claimant has a stable gait, strength and extremities were equal. The claimant does have a curve of the spine. The claimant admits to headaches on and off where she has to use heat/ice to relieve. The claimant was positive for depression, anxiety, unable to recall if she has done certain tasks where she sees a psychiatrist. (Department Exhibit 93)

The treating physician's clinical impression was the claimant was stable with limitations that were expected to last more than 90 days. The claimant could frequently lift less than ten pounds, occasionally lift twenty pounds, but never twenty five pounds. The claimant could stand and/or walk less than two hours of an eight hour workday. There were no assistive devices medically required or needed for ambulation. The claimant could use both hands/arms for simple grasping, reaching, and fine manipulation, but neither feet/legs for operating foot/leg controls. The claimant has to take breaks. She has to nap during the day and has been unable to remain up during the day. The medical findings that support the above physical limitations are that the claimant has to take breaks. She has to nap during the day and she is unable to remain up during

the day. The claimant was mentally limited in memory, sustained concentration, reading/writing, and social interaction. The findings that support the above mental limitations was that the claimant states that her penmanship has worsened and will leave words out when she writes, in a conversation she has loss of thought and doesn't always remember what she was saying. The claimant has to make herself leave home where she is unable to complete tasks. The claimant states she requires help at home to help with her needs where she has a hard time focusing and concentrating. (Department Exhibit 92)

On [REDACTED] the claimant received an x-ray of the lumbosacral spine at [REDACTED]. The radiologist's impression was that there were six lumbar-type vertebral bodies resulting in moderate levoscoliosis. There was moderate levoscoliotic curvature. There was no compression fracture. There was also an accentuated lumbar lordosis. There was narrowing at the L6-S1 interspace, which may be congenital. The pedicles were intact. The facet joints were unremarkable. (Department Exhibit 86)

On [REDACTED], the claimant's treating physician completed a Medical Examination Report, DHS-49, for the claimant. The claimant was first examined on [REDACTED] and last examined on [REDACTED]. The claimant had a history of impairment and chief complaint of hypertension with resistance to medication, depression, anxiety, and panic since initial visit with worsening of symptoms in the past six to twelve months with a regular access to medications and diagnostic tests as well as consultant treatment due to finances. The claimant's current diagnosis was hypertension, uncontrolled, depression, anxiety with panic attacks. The claimant had a normal physical examination except her blood pressure was elevated at 180/118. The treating physician noted lower leg edema with chest pain and pressure with palpitations. Neurologically, the claimant had tremors with anxiety and panic. Mentally, the claimant had depression, anxiety,

panic attacks, angry outbursts, suicidal thoughts, and decreased concentration. (Department Exhibit 12)

The treating physician's clinical impression was the claimant had a temporary disability and was expected to return to work in 12 months. The claimant had no physical limitations but her limitations were expected to last more than 90 days. The claimant could frequently lift less than ten pounds, occasionally lift twenty five pounds, but never fifty pounds or more. There were no assistive devices medically required or needed for ambulation. The claimant could use both hands/arms and feet/legs for repetitive actions. The medical findings that support the above physical limitations was rapid speech, blood pressure elevated, mood down, angry, irritable, off medications due to finances, behaviors escalating, nightmares, hears voices in head, no hallucinations. The claimant was mentally limited in memory, sustained concentration, and social interaction. The findings that support the above mental limitations were a neuropsychiatric evaluation was pending. In addition, the claimant could meet her needs in the home. (Department Exhibit 11)

On [REDACTED], the claimant underwent a cervical, thoracic, and brain MRI at [REDACTED]. The radiologist's impression was negative brain, cervical spine and thoracic spine MRI imaging. (Department Exhibit 85 and 68)

On [REDACTED], the claimant underwent a psychiatric intake evaluation at [REDACTED]. The psychiatrist's impression was that the claimant had bipolar affective disorder, mixed depressed phase, including history of manic episodes throughout her adult life, post traumatic stress disorder with flashbacks and nightmares at night, general anxiety disorder, panic disorder with agoraphobia, and history of alcohol abuse. The claimant has an Axis II diagnosis of personality disorder NOS, possible borderline personality traits, rule out histrionic personality.

The claimant had a GAF of 65 to 70. The claimant's speech was abundant and clear where she seemed to be more at ease as time went on. The claimant has pleasant makeup. The claimant's affect remained board. She remained future oriented. The claimant denied hallucinations, delusions, and ideas of reference. The claimant was not responding to internal stimuli. She does have recurrent night dreams and/or rule out hallucinations revolving around post traumatic stress disorder, the death of her child, and abuse from her biological father. The claimant does remain future oriented about her children and their relationship with her. The claimant's insight seems good and her judgment at this time was fair. (Department Exhibit 31-35)

On [REDACTED], the claimant underwent a neuropsychological evaluation at [REDACTED]. The claimant was given a diagnosis by the independent medical consultant psychologist of major depressive disorder-recurrent, post traumatic stress disorder by history, generalized anxiety disorder by history, and rule out malingering. The claimant was given a current GAF of 52. The claimant's intellectual testing showed that she was in the average range. On a comprehensive neuropsychological test battery, the claimant had a generally benign profile with numerous areas of intact cognitive functioning interspersed with a few areas of deficit. She had above average language and communication skills, intact visual perceptual abilities, and consistently good executive capacities, including visual abstract problem-solving, verbal and non-verbal generative abilities, cognitive flexibility, response inhibition, and self-monitoring skills. The claimant exhibited adequate focused attentional skills. The claimant exhibited an elevated omission error rate on a measure of sustained attention and vigilance. Her commission errors, on the other hand, were within normal limits. The claimant also exhibited impaired abilities on a measure of fine motor dexterity bilaterally. The claimant has a number of cognitive strengths where she has good perceptual-

organizational and verbal-comprehension abilities as well as adequate memory skills, particularly for organized verbal and visual information. Her executive capacities are also an area of real strength. The claimant would appear to be able to work in any number of vocational settings. Her greatest liabilities in terms of successful job performance would appear to lie within the emotional and interpersonal realms. Some of the findings involved a self-consistent effort to overstate her level of disturbance. The reasons for these overstatements are not entirely clear, but motivation to malingering should be ruled out. (Department Exhibit 13-21)

At Step 2, the objective medical evidence in the record indicates that the claimant has established that she has a severe impairment. The claimant is currently being treated and in therapy for her mental impairments. As discussed previously, the claimant's GAF range from 52 on [REDACTED] to 65 to 70 on [REDACTED]. The claimant's two treating physicians listed her as being capable of performing at least light work on [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Therefore, the claimant is not disqualified from receiving disability at Step 2. However, this Administrative Law Judge will proceed through the sequential evaluation process to determine disability because Step 2 is a *de minimus* standard.

In the third step of the sequential consideration of a disability claim, the trier of fact must determine if the claimant's impairment (or combination of impairments) is listed in Appendix 1 of Subpart P of 20 CFR, Part 404. This Administrative Law Judge finds that the claimant's medical record will not support a finding that claimant's impairment(s) is a "listed impairment" or equal to a listed impairment. See Appendix 1 of Subpart P of 20 CFR, Part 404, Part A. Accordingly, claimant cannot be found to be disabled based upon medical evidence alone. 20 CFR 416.920(d). This Administrative Law Judge finds that the claimant's impairments

do not rise to the level necessary to be listed as disabling by law. Therefore, the claimant is disqualified from receiving disability at Step 3.

In the fourth step of the sequential consideration 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). It is the finding of this Administrative Law Judge, based upon the medical evidence and objective, physical and psychological findings, that the claimant does have a driver's license, but does not drive because her medications impair her judgment. The claimant cooks once a day, but she does have an issue because she left the stove on and took a shower. The claimant does not grocery shop because she won't go out in public. The claimant cleans her own home, but she can't lift heavy objects. The claimant does sweep and loads the dishwasher and picks up. The claimant doesn't do any outside work or have any hobbies. The claimant stated that her condition has worsened in the past year because she forgets things and cries easy. The claimant stated that she is taking medication and in therapy for her mental impairment with Community Mental Health.

The claimant stated that she wakes up at 8:00 a.m. She drinks coffee and watches TV. She sits all day. She goes to bed at 10:00 p.m. Sometimes she falls asleep earlier and sometimes she sleeps all day.

The claimant felt that she could walk a half a block. The longest she felt she could stand was 45 minutes. The longest she felt she could sit was two hours. The heaviest weight she felt she could lift and carry was 10-15 pounds. The claimant stated that her level of pain on a scale of 1 to 10 without medication was a 10 that decreases to an 8 with medication.

The claimant does not or has ever smoked. She stopped drinking in 2007 where before she would drink a lot. The claimant has never used or is not currently using illegal or illicit drugs. The claimant stated that there was no work that she felt she could do.

This Administrative Law Judge finds that the claimant has not established that she cannot perform any of her prior work. The claimant is currently being treated at [REDACTED] for her mental impairment and she is participating with MRS. If the claimant continues to participate with [REDACTED] and abstains from using alcohol, the claimant can find an occupation at at least the light level that is simple and unskilled that she can perform. Therefore, the claimant is disqualified from receiving disability at Step 4. However, the Administrative Law Judge will still proceed through the sequential evaluation process to determine whether or not the claimant has the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in her prior jobs.

In the fifth step of the sequential consideration of a disability claim, the trier of fact must determine if the claimant's impairment(s) prevents claimant from doing other work.

20 CFR 416.920(f). This determination is based upon the claimant's:

- (1) residual functional capacity defined simply as "what can you still do despite you limitations?" 20 CFR 416.945;
- (2) age, education, and work experience, 20 CFR 416.963-.965; and
- (3) the kinds of work which exist in significant numbers in the national economy which the claimant could perform despite his/her limitations. 20 CFR 416.966.

...To determine the physical exertion requirements of work in the national economy, we classify jobs as sedentary, light, medium, heavy, and very heavy. These terms have the same meaning as they have in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, published by the Department of Labor.... 20 CFR 416.967.

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. 20 CFR 416.967(a).

Light work. Light work involves lifting no more than 20 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 10 pounds. Even though the weight lifted may be very little, a job is in this category when it requires a good deal of walking or standing, or when it involves sitting most of the time with some pushing and pulling of arm or leg controls.... 20 CFR 416.967(b).

...To be considered capable of performing a full or wide range of light work, you must have the ability to do substantially all of these activities. If someone can do light work, we determine that he or she can also do sedentary work, unless there are additional limiting factors such as loss of fine dexterity or inability to sit for long periods of time. 20 CFR 416.967(b).

Unskilled work. Unskilled work is work which needs little or no judgment to do simple duties that can be learned on the job in a short period of time. The job may or may not require considerable strength.... 20 CFR 416.968(a).

The claimant has submitted insufficient evidence that she lacks the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in her previous employment or that she is physically unable to do any tasks demanded of her. The claimant's testimony as to her limitation indicates her limitations are exertional and non-exertional.

For mental disorders, severity is assessed in terms of the functional limitations imposed by the impairment. Functional limitations are assessed using the criteria in paragraph (B) of the listings for mental disorders (descriptions of restrictions of activities of daily living, social functioning; concentration, persistence, or pace; and ability to tolerate increased mental demands associated with competitive work).... 20 CFR, Part 404, Subpart P, App. 1, 12.00(C).

In the instant case, the claimant stated that she is in therapy and taking medication for her mental impairments. The claimant's GAF ranged from 52 to 65 to 70 which is defined as some mild symptoms with some difficulty in social, occupational, or school functioning, but generally functions pretty well, has some meaningful interpersonal relationships to serious symptoms where any serious impairment in social, occupational, or school functioning. If the claimant continues her treatment and medication with [REDACTED], the claimant should be able to perform simple, unskilled, light work. As a result, there is sufficient medical evidence of a mental impairment that is so severe that it would prevent the claimant from performing skilled, detailed work. (See analysis at Step 2.)

At Step 5, the claimant should be able to meet the physical requirements of light work, based upon the claimant's physical abilities. Under the Medical-Vocational guidelines, a younger individual, high school education and an unskilled work history, who is limited to light work, is not considered disabled. 20 CFR 404, Subpart P, Appendix 2, Rule 202.20. The Medical-Vocational guidelines are not strictly applied with non-exertional impairments such as previously cited in Step 2 and Step 5. 20 CFR 404, Subpart P, Appendix 2, Section 200.00. Using the Medical-Vocational guidelines as a framework for making this decision and after giving full consideration to the claimant's physical and mental impairments, the Administrative Law Judge finds that the claimant can still perform a wide range of simple, unskilled, light activities and that the claimant does not meet the definition of disabled under the MA program.

The department's Program Eligibility Manual provides the following policy statements and instructions for caseworkers regarding the SDA program.

DISABILITY – SDA

DEPARTMENT POLICY

SDA

To receive SDA, a person must be disabled, caring for a disabled person, or age 65 or older.

Note: There is no disability requirement for AMP. PEM 261, p. 1.

DISABILITY

A person is disabled for SDA purposes if he:

- . receives other specified disability-related benefits or services, or
- . resides in a qualified Special Living Arrangement facility, or
- . is certified as unable to work due to mental or physical disability for at least 90 days from the onset of the disability.
- . is diagnosed as having Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

If the client's circumstances change so that the basis of his/her disability is no longer valid, determine if he/she meets any of the other disability criteria. Do NOT simply initiate case closure. PEM, Item 261, p. 1.

Other Benefits or Services

Persons receiving one of the following benefits or services meet the SDA disability criteria:

- . Retirement, Survivors and Disability Insurance (RSDI), due to disability or blindness.
- . Supplemental Security Income (SSI), due to disability or blindness.
- . Medicaid (including spend-down) as blind or disabled if the disability/blindness is based on:
 - .. a DE/MRT/SRT determination, or
 - .. a hearing decision, or
 - .. having SSI based on blindness or disability recently terminated (within the past 12 months) for financial reasons.

Medicaid received by former SSI recipients based on policies in PEM 150 under "**SSI TERMINATIONS,**" INCLUDING "**MA While Appealing Disability Termination,**" does not qualify a person as disabled for SDA. Such persons must be certified as disabled or meet one of the other SDA qualifying criteria. See "**Medical Certification of Disability**" below.

- . Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS). A person is receiving services if he has been determined eligible for MRS and has an active MRS case. Do not refer or advise applicants to apply for MRS for the purpose of qualifying for SDA.
- . Special education services from the local intermediate school district. To qualify, the person may be:
 - .. attending school under a special education plan approved by the local Individual Educational Planning Committee (IEPC); **or**
 - .. not attending under an IEPC approved plan but has been certified as a special education student **and** is attending a school program leading to a high school diploma or its equivalent, **and** is under age 26. The program does not have to be designated as "special education" as long as the person has been certified as a special education student. Eligibility on this basis continues until the person completes the high school program or reaches age 26, whichever is earlier.
- . Refugee or asylee who lost eligibility for Social Security Income (SSI) due to exceeding the maximum time limit PEM, Item 261, pp. 1-2.

Because the claimant does not meet the definition of disabled under the MA program and because the evidence in the record does not establish that the claimant is unable to work for a period exceeding 90 days, the claimant does not meet the disability criteria for SDA. During the hearing, the claimant testified that she was participating with MRS, which may make her eligible for SDA.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the department has appropriately established that it was acting in compliance with department policy when it denied the claimant's application for MA-P, retroactive MA-P, and SDA. The claimant should be able to perform any level of simple, unskilled, light work. The department has established its case by a preponderance of the evidence.

Accordingly, the department's decision is **AFFIRMED**. In addition, the department is ordered to determine if the claimant is eligible for State Disability Assistance based on MRS participation.

/s/ _____
Carmen G. Fahie
Administrative Law Judge
for Ismael Ahmed, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: June 11, 2009

Date Mailed: June 11, 2009

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.

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The Claimant may appeal the Decision and Order to Circuit Court within 30 days of the mailing 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.

CGF/vmc

cc:

