

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: 2008-24824

Issue No: 2009-4031

Case No: [REDACTED]

Load No: [REDACTED]

Hearing Date:

October 20, 2008

Oakland County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Jonathan W. Owens

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 hearing was held on October 20, 2008. Claimant appeared and testified.

ISSUE

Whether the Department of Human Services (Department) properly determined that the Claimant is not "disabled" for purposes of the Medical Assistance (MA) program 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 a material fact:

1. On December 26, 2007, the Claimant applied for MA-P, retro MA and SDA.
2. MRT denied Claimant's request.
3. On July 8, 2008, the Claimant filed a request for hearing regarding the Department's denial of benefits.

4. The Claimant is 50 years old.
5. The Claimant has a college degree in social sciences.
6. The Claimant suffers from hypertension, incarcerated hernia, stroke in 2007, morbid obesity, compressed spinal cord.
7. The Claimant suffers with the following symptoms: shortness of breath, speech problems, headaches, poor sight, poor balance, back pain, fatigue, neck pain, and fluttering heart.
8. The Claimant's limitations have lasted for 12 months or more.
9. The Claimant has significant limitations on physical activities involving sitting, standing, walking, bending, lifting, and stooping.

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 (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) 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).

In order to receive MA benefits based upon disability or blindness, claimant must be disabled or blind as defined in Title XVI of the Social Security Act (20 R 416.901). The Department, being authorized to make such disability determinations, utilizes the SSI definition of disability when making medical decisions on MA applications. MA-P (disability), also is known as Medicaid, which is a program designated to help public assistance claimants pay their medical expenses.

The law defines disability as the inability to do substantial gainful activity (SGA) 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).

Because disability must be determined on the basis of medical evidence, Federal regulations have delineated a set order entailing a step sequential process for evaluating physical or mental impairments. When claimant is found either disabled or not disabled at any point in the process, the claimant is not considered further.

Addressing the following factors:

The first factor to be consider is whether the Claimant can perform Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) defined in 20 CFR 416.920(b). In this case, the Claimant is not working. Therefore, the Claimant is not disqualified at this step in the evaluation.

The second step to be determined in considering whether the Claimant is considered disabled is whether the severity of the impairment. In order to qualify the impairment must be considered severe which is defined as an impairment which significantly limits an individual's physical or mental ability to perform basic work activities. Examples of these include:

1. Physical functions such as walking, standing, sitting, lifting, pushing, 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).

In this case, the Claimant's medical evidence of record supports a finding that Claimant has significant physical and mental limitations upon Claimant's ability to perform basic work activities such as walking, standing, sitting, lifting, pushing, pulling, reaching, carrying, or handling; Medical evidence has clearly established that the Claimant has an impairment (or combination of impairments) that has more than a minimal effect on the Claimant's work activities. See Social Security Rulings: 85-28, 88-13, and 82-63.

In the third step of the analysis, 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 does support a finding that the 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. Specifically 1.04 is likely met.

Social Security Ruling 02-01 directs adjudicators to consider that the combined effects of obesity with other impairments may be greater than the non-obesity impairment alone. The National Institute of Health Clinical Guidelines for Obesity defines three levels of obesity. Level I includes Body Mass Index (BMIs) of 30.0-34.9, Level II includes BMIs of 35.0-39.9 and Level III extreme obesity is considered over 40.0. Obesity at Level III represents a condition which creates the greatest risk for developing obesity related impairments. Claimant's weight was 226 lbs and she is 5'3 in height. The Claimant's obesity, as measured by her BMI, may be calculated using the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Body Mass Index calculation, found at: http://cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpp/bmi/adult_BMI/english_bmi_calculator/bmi_calculator.htm, it is possible to calculate the Claimant's BMI. The formula for calculating BMI is as follows: Calculate BMI by dividing weight in pounds by height in inches squared and multiplying by a conversion factor of 703. This formula as applied to the Claimant's height and weight yields a

BMI 40, or Level III obesity. This level of obesity surely impacts the Claimant's blood pressure, spinal cord compression heart condition.

Social Security Ruling SSR-02 provides in pertinent part:

Because there is no listing for obesity, we will find that an individual with obesity "meets" the requirements of a listing if he or she has another impairment that, by itself, meets the requirements of a listing. We will also find that a listing is met if there is an impairment that, in combination with obesity, meets the requirements of a listing. For example, obesity may increase the severity of coexisting or related impairments to the extent that the combination of impairments meets the requirements of a listing. This is especially true of musculoskeletal, respiratory, and cardiovascular impairments. It may also be true for other coexisting or related impairments, including mental disorders.

Accordingly, this Administrative Law Judge concludes that the Claimant is disabled for purposes of the MA program at step 3 after meeting listing 1.04 when considering the Claimant's level obesity.

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).

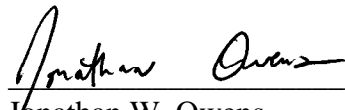
A person is considered disabled for purposes of SDA if the person has a physical or mental impairment which meets federal SSI disability standards for at least ninety days. Receipt of SSI or RSDI benefits based on disability or blindness or the receipt of MA benefits based on disability or blindness (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. The Claimant is eligible for SDA benefits based on the above finding of disability.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the Claimant is medically disabled as of September 2007.

Accordingly, the Department decision is hereby REVERSED and the Department is ORDERED to initiate a review of the application dated December 26, 2007, if not done previously, to determine Claimant's non-medical eligibility. The Department shall inform Claimant of the determination in writing. The Department shall set this case for review in January 2011.



Jonathan W. Owens
Administrative Law Judge
for Ismael Ahmed, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: 03/04/10

Date Mailed: 03/04/10

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 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.

JWO/dj

cc:

