

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: 2008-32180
Issue No: 2009; 4031
Case No: [REDACTED]
Load No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date:
February 17, 2009
Wayne County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Landis Y. Lain

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 February 17, 2009. Claimant personally appeared and testified.

ISSUE

Did the Department of Human Services (the department) properly deny 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 July 31, 2008, claimant filed an application for Medical Assistance and State Disability Assistance benefits alleging disability.
- (2) On August 14, 2008, the Medical Review Team denied claimant's application stating that claimant could perform other work.

(3) On August 20, 2008, the department caseworker sent claimant notice that his application was denied.

(4) On September 11, 2008, claimant filed a request for a hearing to contest the department's negative action.

(5) On October 15, 2008, the State Hearing Review Team again denied claimant's application stating in its analysis and recommendation: the claimant's left lower extremity is expected to heal and pose no lasting limitation. Medical opinion was considered in light of CFR 416.927. The evidence in the file does not demonstrate any other impairment that would pose a significant limitation. The medical evidence of record does not document a mental/physical impairment that significantly limits the claimant's ability to perform basic work activities. Therefore, MA-P is denied per 20 CFR 416.921(a). Retroactive MA-P was considered in this case and is also denied. SDA is denied per PEM 261 due to lack of severity.

(6) Claimant is a 37-year-old man whose birth date is [REDACTED]. Claimant is 5' 10" tall and weighs 160 pounds. Claimant has a Bachelor of Arts in Business Management and is able to read and write and does have basic math skills.

(7) Claimant is currently employed by the [REDACTED] as a [REDACTED] worker 36 hours per week earning [REDACTED] an hour.

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).

Pursuant to Federal Rule 42 CFR 435.540, the Department of Human Services uses the federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) policy in determining eligibility for disability under the Medical Assistance program. Under SSI, disability is defined as:

...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

A set order is used to determine disability. Current work activity, severity of impairments, residual functional capacity, past work, age, or education and work experience is reviewed. If there is a finding that an individual is disabled or not disabled at any point in the review, there will be no further evaluation. 20 CFR 416.920.

If an individual is working and the work is substantial gainful activity, the individual is not disabled regardless of the medical condition, education and work experience. 20 CFR 416.920(c).

If the impairment or combination of impairments do not significantly limit physical or mental ability to do basic work activities, it is not a severe impairment(s) and disability does not exist. Age, education and work experience will not be considered. 20 CFR 416.920.

Statements about pain or other symptoms do not alone establish disability. There must be medical signs and laboratory findings which demonstrate a medical impairment... 20 CFR 416.929(a).

...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).

In determining disability under the law, the ability to work is measured. An individual's functional capacity for doing basic work activities is evaluated. If an individual has the ability to perform basic work activities without significant limitations, he or she is not considered disabled. 20 CFR 416.994(b)(1)(iv).

Basic work activities are 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).

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

Medical evidence 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 the impairment(s), including your symptoms, diagnosis and prognosis, what an individual can do despite impairment(s), and the physical or mental restrictions. 20 CFR 416.927(a)(2).

All of the evidence relevant to the claim, including medical opinions, is reviewed and findings are made. 20 CFR 416.927(c).

The Administrative Law Judge is responsible for making the determination or decision about whether the statutory definition of disability is met. The Administrative Law Judge reviews all medical findings and other evidence that support a medical source's statement of disability.... 20 CFR 416.927(e).

A statement by a medical source finding that an individual is "disabled" or "unable to work" does not mean that disability exists for the purposes of the program. 20 CFR 416.927(e).

When determining disability, the federal regulations require that several considerations be analyzed in sequential order. If disability can be ruled out at any step, analysis of the next step is not required. These steps are:

1. Does the client perform Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)? If yes, the client is ineligible for MA. If no, the analysis continues to Step 2. 20 CFR 416.920(b).
2. Does the client have a severe impairment that has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more or result in death? If no, the

client is ineligible for MA. If yes, the analysis continues to Step 3. 20 CFR 416.920(c).

3. Does the impairment appear on a special listing of impairments or are the client's symptoms, signs, and laboratory findings at least equivalent in severity to the set of medical findings specified for the listed impairment? If no, the analysis continues to Step 4. If yes, MA is approved. 20 CFR 416.290(d).
4. Can the client do the former work that he/she performed within the last 15 years? If yes, the client is ineligible for MA. If no, the analysis continues to Step 5. 20 CFR 416.920(e).
5. Does the client have the Residual Functional Capacity (RFC) to perform other work according to the guidelines set forth at 20 CFR 404, Subpart P, Appendix 2, Sections 200.00-204.00? If yes, the analysis ends and the client is ineligible for MA. If no, MA is approved. 20 CFR 416.920(f).

At Step 1, claimant is engaged in substantial gainful activity and therefore is disqualified from receiving disability at Step 1.

The objective medical evidence on the record indicates that hospital records of [REDACTED] indicate that claimant was treated for cellulitis of his left lower extremity as a result of some identified puncture wound. He was noted to have a history of Crohn's disease status post bowel resection in [REDACTED]. On [REDACTED] claimant's blood pressure was 109/57, pulse rate of 88, respiratory rate of 20, temperature 97.1 orally. Pulse oxygen was 99 percent on room air. He was alert, conscious and oriented x3. He had normal mentation. No apparent distress. Mild discomfort. His pupils were equal, round and reactive to light. No nystagmus, no pallor, no icterus. Normocephalic, atraumatic, ears, nose, mouth and throat were grossly normal. His lung fields were clear and equal bilaterally. Cardiovascularly, he had a regular rate and rhythm, no murmur. Gastrointestinal, a little bit of abdominal scars noted, but otherwise soft, pliable and benign. His skin was pink, warm and dry. No turgor. No rash. There was superficial cellulitis surrounding the left calf, circumferential of left leg, almost from the knee to the ankle and a

regular pattern of about 60 to 70 percent of the lower extremity of the red warm cellulitis with an abscess formation over the left lateral proximal calf which was draining serosanguineous brown, foul smelling drainage at that time. Claimant moved all extremities with normal strength, power and tone, equal bilaterally. Dorsalis pedis pulses and tibial pulses, 2+. Normal cutaneous sensation.

At Step 2, claimant has the burden of proof of establishing that he has a severely restrictive physical or mental impairment that has lasted or is expected to last for the duration of at least 12 months. There is no objective clinical medical evidence in the record that claimant suffers a severely restrictive physical or mental impairment. Claimant testified on the record that he doesn't have any mental impairment. Claimant testified on the record that he has no limits in his ability to stand, walk, or sit. Claimant can squat, bend at the waist, shower and dress himself and tie his shoes and touch his toes. Claimant is a [REDACTED] and does carry the [REDACTED]. Claimant is right handed and his hands and arms are fine and his leg on his left calf is still healing from his abscess. Claimant testified that sometimes his level of pain on a scale from 1 to 10 is a 10 but it comes and goes and that when he takes medication his pain is a 0. Claimant testified on the record that he takes the bus everyday about 45 minutes one way and that he is able to cook everyday and cooks things like chicken and spaghetti and he grocery shops one time per month with no help. Claimant does clean his home by dusting, mopping, vacuuming, doing laundry and dishes. The evidentiary record is insufficient to find that claimant suffers a severely restrictive mental or physical impairment. For these reasons, the Administrative Law Judge finds that claimant has failed to meet his burden of proof at Step 2. Claimant must be denied benefits at this step based upon his failure to meet the evidentiary burden.

If claimant had not been denied at Step 2, the analysis would proceed to Step 3 where the medical evidence of claimant's condition does not give rise to a finding that he would meet a statutory listing in the code of federal regulations.

If claimant had not already been denied at Step 2, this Administrative Law Judge would have to deny him again at Step 4 based upon his ability to perform past relevant work. Claimant is currently employed at the [REDACTED] as a [REDACTED] and has been so employed for the past two years. Therefore, claimant is disqualified from receiving disability at Step 4 because he can perform his current and past work.

The department's Program Eligibility Manual contains the following policy statements and instructions for caseworkers regarding the State Disability Assistance program: to receive State Disability Assistance, a person must be disabled, caring for a disabled person or age 65 or older. PEM, Item 261, page 1. Because the claimant does not meet the definition of disabled under the MA-P program and because the evidence of record does not establish that claimant is unable to work for a period exceeding 90 days, the claimant does not meet the disability criteria for State Disability Assistance benefits either.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the department appropriately denied claimant's application for disability based Medical Assistance, retroactive Medical Assistance and State Disability Assistance benefits.

Accordingly, the department's decision is AFFIRMED.

/s/

Landis Y. Lain
Administrative Law Judge
for Ismael Ahmed, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: March 12, 2009

Date Mailed: March 13, 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.

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.

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