

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: 2008-19461
Issue No: 2009; 4031
Case No: [REDACTED]
Load No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date:
October 7, 2008
Clare 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, an in-person hearing was held on Tuesday, October 7, 2008. The claimant personally appeared and testified with his attorney, [REDACTED].

ISSUE

Did the department properly deny the claimant's application for Medical Assistance (MA-P), retroactive Medical Assistance, 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 March 5, 2008, the claimant applied for MA-P and SDA with retroactive MA-P to December 2007.

(2) On April 29, 2008, the Medical Review Team (MRT) denied the claimant's application for MA-P and retroactive MA-P stating that the claimant was capable of performing other work 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 6, 2008, the department caseworker sent the claimant a notice that his application was denied.

(4) On May 19, 2008, the department received a hearing request from the claimant, contesting the department's negative action.

(5) On June 12, 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 has a history of alcohol abuse. He has a borderline IQ with some adjustment disorder, but is able to do simple, unskilled work. He had some limitation of motion in the right shoulder and back. He had an absent right ankle reflex, but his neurological exam was otherwise intact. Gait was normal. Grip strength and dexterity were normal. The claimant would be able to do light work.

The claimant's impairments do not meet/equal the intent or severity of a Social Security listing. The medical evidence of record indicates that the claimant retains the capacity to perform simple, unskilled, light work. In lieu of detailed work history, the claimant will be returned to other work. Therefore, based on the claimant's vocational profile (younger individual, limited education, and an unskilled work history), MA-P is denied using Vocational Rule 202.17 as a guide. Retroactive MA-P was considered in this case and is also denied. SDA is denied per PEM 261 because the nature and severity of the claimant's impairments would not preclude work activity at the above stated level for 90 days.

(6) During the hearing on October 7, 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 October 7, 2008 and forwarded to SHRT for review on October 9, 2008.

(7) On October 13, 2008, 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 low back pain, shoulder pain, and mental problems. He is 48 years old and has a limited education with a history of unskilled work. The claimant did not meet applicable Social Security Listings 1.02, 1.04, 12.05, and 12.04. The claimant is capable of performing other work that is light and unskilled under Vocational Rule 202.17.

(8) The claimant is a 49 year-old man whose date of birth is [REDACTED]. The claimant is 6' tall and weighs 220 pounds. The claimant completed the 10th grade of high school where he was special education in all subjects. The claimant can read and write and do addition and subtraction, but not multiplication and division. The claimant was last employed as a laborer on March 20, 2007 at the light level. The claimant has also been employed as a custodian at the medium level, owner of a custodial company, and supervisor.

(9) The claimant's alleged impairments are arthritis, degenerative disc disease, arthritis in the right shoulder, paranoid personality disorder, depression, and adjustment 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 20, 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’s neurosurgeon submitted a letter to the claimant’s treating physician. The claimant had a normal physical examination. The treating neurosurgeon stated that the claimant had decreased disc space height at L4-L5 with a central bulging disc going off to the left. The claimant may have mild spondylolisthesis there. The treating neurosurgeon suspected that the claimant’s pain may be on the basis of degenerative disc disease at L4-L5. He was not certain that surgery would help where he was not a candidate at the present time because the claimant smoked. The treating neurosurgeon would not operate if the claimant was smoking because the fusion would not heal. The claimant would have had to stop smoking for six weeks before any further treatment or surgery. (Department Exhibit A)

On [REDACTED], the claimant was given a MRI of the lumbar spine without contrast at [REDACTED]. The radiologist's impression was a large focal disc bulge that was right superior central and central at L4-L5. There were also associated osteophytes. The disc bulge effaces the lateral recess on the right side. There was also a left lateral component to the disc bulge, which may efface the lateral recess on the left side. Although compression of nerve roots could not be visualized, there was a distinct possibility given the effacement of the lateral recesses. (Department Exhibit 417-418)

On [REDACTED], the claimant was given a MRI of the right shoulder at [REDACTED]. The radiologist's impression was mild degenerative changes without evidence of a rotator cuff tear. (Department Exhibit 420)

On [REDACTED], the claimant was given an x-ray of the shoulder at [REDACTED]. The radiologist's impression was mild to moderate degenerative changes. There was mild hypertrophic change about the acromioclavicular joint and greater tuberosity. These changes were very mild in the acromioclavicular joint, and a little bit more pronounced in the greater tuberosity. The glenohumeral joint was well maintained with no fracture identified. (Department Exhibit 419)

On [REDACTED], the claimant was given an x-ray of the lumbar spine at [REDACTED] that showed vertebral height and alignment was satisfactory. There were four non rib-bearing, non sacralized segments. There was relevantly advanced spondylosis at L4-S1 with mild spurring and eburation opposing end plates. Remaining disc spaces were well maintained. Facetal joint narrowing was noted at L4-S1 without significant spurring or eburation. (Department Exhibit 261)

On [REDACTED], the claimant was given an independent medical evaluation at [REDACTED]. The independent medical consultant's impression was that the claimant had right shoulder pain with limitations of range of motion, weakness, and pain. The claimant continued to use over-the-counter pain medication for symptomatic relief. He had weakness and was dropping objects. He had limitations with impingement signs on exam. The claimant had lower back pain with a myofascial component of back pain with evidence of facet arthropathy. The claimant was cooperative in answering questions and following commands. The claimant's left eye had exophthalmos. The claimant's affect, dress, and effort were appropriate. The claimant's immediate, recent, and remote memory was intact with normal concentration. The claimant's insight and judgment were both appropriate. The claimant provided good effort during the examination. The claimant's motor strength and tone were normal. Sensory was intact to light touch. Romberg testing was negative. The claimant walked with a normal gait without the use of an assistive device. His gait was stable. (Department Exhibit 266-269)

The claimant was evaluated on [REDACTED] by [REDACTED]. The psychiatrist's impression was that the claimant cannot complete detailed tasks. The claimant does have the ability to do routine tasks that do not involve frequent interaction with others. However, he can socialize as needed as demonstrated at the psych CE. He retains the ability to do one and two step tasks on a sustained basis. The claimant had no marked limitations, but some moderate limitations. (Department Exhibit 274-276)

On [REDACTED], the claimant was given an independent psychiatric/psychological examination by [REDACTED]. The independent medical consultant licensed psychologist's clinical impression was that the claimant had adjustment disorder with depressed mood with a secondary diagnosis of borderline intellectual functioning and paranoid personality

disorder by history. The claimant was given a GAF of 56. His prognosis was poor, but he could manage his own benefit funds. The claimant drove himself to his appointment and was 25 minutes early. The claimant's posture was stiff and gait was slowed. The claimant's clothing was clean and casual with fair hygiene. The claimant was cooperative and attentive. The claimant stated that he an average daily pain of 4 on a scale of 10 depending on his activity level. The claimant appeared to have contact with reality where he did not appear to have a tendency to minimize or exaggerate symptomology. The claimant's thought processes were logical, sequential, and pertinent. The claimant denied hallucinations, delusions, persecutory ideas, obsessions, or unusual powers. The claimant did report some feelings of worthlessness, but denied feelings of hopelessness. The claimant denied suicidal ideation. His speech was clear and understandable with normal rate, rhythm, and intonation. The claimant stated that he had difficulty falling asleep and awakens two to six times nightly. The claimant's mood was euthymic with a full affect. The claimant was oriented x3. There is not sufficient documentation to show that alleged behaviors related to this diagnosis significantly impair his functioning in occupational or other settings. Furthermore, the claimant demonstrated no paranoid behavior in session and related little symptoms other than not trusting others. One would expect someone with paranoid personality disorder to exhibit some distrust in an interview such as this.

(Department Exhibit 56-60)

At Step 2, the objective medical evidence in the record indicates that the claimant has established that he has a severe impairment. The claimant has some limitations with his back and was diagnosed with adjustment disorder with depressed mood, borderline intellectual functioning, and paranoid personality disorder by history. He did have a GAF of 56. 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 and can drive, but currently doesn't have a car and his back interferes with the use of his legs. The claimant doesn't cook because he doesn't know how. The claimant grocery shops twice a month, but has a hard time walking on hard surfaces that bother his back. The claimant does not clean his own home. The claimant doesn't do any outside work or have any hobbies. The claimant stated that his condition has worsened in the past year because of his increase in pain where he can't do as much. The claimant stated that for his mental impairments, he is not taking medication and not in therapy.

The claimant stated that he wakes up between 4:00 to 6:00 a.m. He watches the news. He walks around outside and smokes. He sits in his recliner. He goes to bed between 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. in his recliner because he can't sleep in his bed. The pain keeps him up. He naps for one hour during the day.

The claimant stated that he could walk 100 yards. The longest he felt he could stand was 5-10 minutes. The longest he felt he could sit was 30-45 minutes. The claimant stated that the heaviest weight he could carry and walk was 10 pounds. The claimant stated that he is right-handed and that his arthritis in his right shoulder affects his ability to use his right hand. The claimant stated that his level of pain on a scale of 1 to 10 without medication was an 8/10; that decreases to a 4 with medication.

The claimant stated that he smokes two packs of cigarettes a day. He's a reformed alcoholic from 1989-1990 where he used to drink too much. The claimant stated he does not or has ever taken illegal or illicit drugs.

This Administrative Law Judge finds that the claimant has not established that he cannot perform any of his prior work. The claimant was previously employed as a laborer and custodian, which are jobs that are performed at the simple, unskilled, light level in the national economy. The claimant has also been previously employed as a supervisor, which is a job that is performed at the light to sedentary level in the national economy. The claimant should be able to perform simple, unskilled, light work with his back and shoulder issues. The claimant is currently not being treated or taking medication for his mental impairments. 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 his 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 your 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 he lacks the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in his previous employment or that he is physically unable to do any tasks demanded of him. The claimant's testimony as to his limitation indicates his 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 he has paranoid personality disorder, depression, and adjustment disorder. He is currently not in therapy or taking medication. (See analysis in Step 2.) Because the claimant is not in treatment or taking medication, the claimant should be able to perform at least simple, unskilled work. As a result, there is insufficient medical evidence of a mental impairment that is so severe that it would prevent the claimant from working at any job.

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, with a limited or less education, and a skilled and unskilled work history, who is limited to light work, is not considered disabled. 20 CFR 404, Subpart P, Appendix 2, Rule

202.19. The Medical-Vocational guidelines are not strictly applied with non-exertional impairments such as paranoid personality disorder, depression, and adjustment disorder. 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.

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 simple, unskilled, light work. The department has established its case by a preponderance of the evidence.

Accordingly, the department's decision is **AFFIRMED**.

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

Date Signed: September 2, 2009

Date Mailed: September 2, 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.

CGF/vmc

cc:

