

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: 2009-11125

Issue No: 4031

Case No: [REDACTED]

Load No: [REDACTED]

Hearing Date:

June 15, 2009

Wayne 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 June 15, 2009. Claimant appeared and testified.

ISSUE

Whether the department properly determined the claimant is not "disabled" for purposes of 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 September 16, 2008 the Claimant representative applied for SDA.
2. On October 30, 2008 MRT denied the Claimant's request for SDA.
3. On December 15, 2008 the Claimant submitted to the Department a request for hearing.

4. The Claimant is 49 years old.
5. The Claimant completed schooling up through 12th grade.
6. The Claimant suffers with Schizophrenia, heart attack in 2006, congestive heart failure, bipolar.
7. GAF of 25.
8. The Claimant has significant limitations on understanding, carrying out, and remembering simple instructions; use of judgment; responding appropriately to supervision, co-workers and usual work situations; and dealing with changes in a routine work setting.
9. The Claimant's limitations have lasted for 90 days or more.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

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.

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 steps:

The first step 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 currently working nor in the past year has the Claimant been employed. Therefore, the Claimant is not disqualified a 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 mental limitations upon Claimant's ability to perform basic

work activities such as understanding, carrying out, and remembering simple instructions; use of judgment; responding appropriately to supervision, co-workers, and usual work situations; and dealing with changes in a routine work setting. 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.

The medical records submitted for consideration demonstrate the Claimant has a schizoaffective disorder. The Claimant struggles with short term memory problems, feelings of guilt and worthlessness. The Claimant's GAF is 40 according to his treating psychiatrist. The Claimant's psychiatrist found him limited in all areas of the mental residual functional capacity assessment, which indicates the Claimant's odds of successful employment unlikely. The Claimant has ongoing mental health issues for many years which until recently included hearing voices. The Claimant is still struggling according to the records submitted with inappropriate thoughts and behavior.

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 listing 12.03.

The person claiming a physical or mental disability has the burden to establish it through the use of competent medical evidence from qualified medical sources such as clinical/laboratory findings, diagnosis/prescribed treatment, prognosis for a recovery

and/or medical assessment of ability to do work-related activities or ability to reason and to make appropriate mental adjustments, if a mental disability is being alleged. 20 CFR 416.913. A conclusory statement by a physician or mental health professional that an individual is disabled or blind is not sufficient, without supporting medical evidence, to establish disability. 20 CFR 416.927.

In this case, this Administrative Law Judge finds the Claimant maybe considered presently disabled at the third step for purposes of the SDA program and the Claimant appears to meet listing 12.03. This Administrative Law Judge will not continue through the remaining steps of the assessment. The Claimant's and the medical documentation support the finding that the Claimant meets the requirements of the listing.

This Administrative Law Judge finds that the Claimant is presently disabled and for purposes of the SDA program as of September 16, 2008.

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 2008.

Accordingly, the Department decision is hereby REVERSED and the Department is ORDERED to initiate a review of the application dated September 16, 2008, if not done previously, to determine Claimant's non-medical eligibility. The Department shall inform Claimant of the determination in writing. This case shall be reviewed in May 2010.

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

Date Signed: 8/25/09

Date Mailed: 8/28/09

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

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

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