

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: 2009-18326

Issue No: 2009

Case No: [REDACTED]

Load No: [REDACTED]

Hearing Date:

June 11, 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 June 11, 2009. Claimant personally appeared and testified. Claimant was represented at the hearing by [REDACTED]

ISSUE

Did the Department of Human Services (the department) properly deny claimant's application for Medical Assistance (MA-P) and retroactive Medical Assistance (retro MA-P)?

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 February 9, 2009, claimant filed an application for Medical Assistance and retroactive Medical Assistance benefits alleging disability.

(2) On February 25, 2009, the Medical Review Team denied claimant's application stating that claimant could perform other work.

(3) On February 26, 2009, the department caseworker sent claimant notice that his application was denied.

(4) On March 4, 2009, claimant filed a request for a hearing to contest the department's negative action.

(5) On April 30, 2009, the State Hearing Review Team again denied claimant's application stating in its analysis and recommendation: The claimant had a stress test in [REDACTED] which showed good exercise tolerance and no EKG evidence of ischemia. His chest pain was atypical. His exam in [REDACTED] was basically unremarkable but he did have a possible lipoma. A mental status exam showed claimant has substance abuse and possible depression. The claimant's treating physician has given light work restrictions based on the claimant's physical impairments. However, this Medical Source Opinion (MSO) is inconsistent with the great weight of the objective medical evidence and per 20 CFR 416.927c(2)(3)(4) and 20 CFR 416.927d(3),(4),(5), will not be given controlling weight. The collective objective medical evidence shows that the claimant is capable of performing unskilled, medium work. Public Law 104-121 is cited due to the materiality of drug and alcohol abuse. 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 a wide range of unskilled, medium work. In lieu of detailed work history, the claimant will be returned to other work. Therefore, based on the claimant's vocational profile of a younger individual, limited education and a history of unskilled work, MA-P is denied using Vocational Rule 203.25 as a guide. Retroactive MA-P was considered in this case and is also denied.

(6) Claimant is a 34-year-old man whose birth date is [REDACTED]. Claimant is 5' 5-1/2" tall and weighs 160 pounds. Claimant attended the 11th grade and attends GED classes five days a week, four hours per day.

(7) Claimant last worked September 20, 2006 doing light industrial jobs for a temporary agency which he did on and off for ten years. Claimant has also worked at [REDACTED] as unloader and as a machine metal finisher. Claimant was incarcerated for two years and recently got out of prison in [REDACTED]

(8) Claimant alleges as disabling impairments: unstable angina, a fractured leg in [REDACTED], arthritis, hypertension, asthma, and substance abuse.

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 (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 not engaged in substantial gainful activity and has not worked since 2006. Claimant is not disqualified from receiving disability at Step 1.

The objective medical evidence on the record indicates that the claimant was seen in [REDACTED] due to chest pain. (Page 17) A stress test showed good exercise tolerance and no EKG evidence of ischemia. (Page 19) A DHS-49 form dated [REDACTED] showed the claimant had exercised induced asthma and hypertension. His exam was within normal limits except for chest pain. (Page 11) The doctor indicated that claimant could occasionally lift 25 pounds, and stand/walk about six hours in an eight hour day. (Page 12)

On examination in [REDACTED], the claimant was 5' 5-1/2" tall and 155 pounds. Blood pressure was 140/80. Lungs were clear. There was a tumor at T10-T11 which was freely mobile, subcutaneous in nature and non-tender. Heart sounds were normal. He had full range of motion of the cervical spine, thoracolumbar spine, knees, hips, ankles, shoulders, elbows and wrists. Gait was normal. Muscle power was 5/5 in all extremities. Deep tendon reflexes were bilaterally symmetrical and 2+. Pain and touch were intact bilaterally. The claimant's chest pain was atypical and he had a possible lipoma of the left posterior chest. (New Information from DDS)

A mental status examination dated [REDACTED] showed the claimant's hygiene and grooming were good. There was some eye contact. He is able to take care of his basic needs. Speech was spontaneous and logical. He admitted hearing voices and seeing things and feeling paranoid, mostly under the influence. His mood was calm and his affect was blunted. Diagnosis included alcohol abuse, marijuana dependence, substance induced mood disorder, dysthymic disorder, rule out major depressive disorder and antisocial personality traits. (New Information from DDS)

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 insufficient objective clinical medical evidence in the record that

claimant suffers a severely restrictive physical or mental impairment. Claimant has reports of pain in multiple areas of his body; however, there are no corresponding clinical findings that support the reports of symptoms and limitations made by the claimant. The DHS-49 in the file indicates that claimant is normal in all examination areas except that he does have some chest pain. The date of his last examination was [REDACTED]. Claimant could occasionally lift 25 pounds or less and frequently lift 20 pounds or less. Claimant's condition was stable and he could stand or walk about six hours in an eight hour day and sit about six hours in an eight hour day. He could use both of his upper extremities for simple grasping, reaching, pushing/pulling and fine manipulation and operate foot and leg controls with both feet and legs. (Pages 11-12) There is no medical finding that claimant has any muscle atrophy or trauma, abnormality or injury that is consistent with a deteriorating condition. In short, the claimant has restricted himself from tasks associated with occupational functioning based upon his reports of pain (symptoms) rather than medical findings. Reported symptoms are an insufficient basis upon which a finding that claimant has met the evidentiary burden of proof can be made. This Administrative Law Judge finds that the medical record is insufficient to establish that claimant has a severely restrictive physical impairment.

There is insufficient objective medical evidence in the record indicating claimant suffers mental limitations resulting from his reportedly depressed state. There is no mental residual functional capacity assessment in the record. The evidentiary record is insufficient to find that claimant suffers a severely restrictive mental impairment. For these reasons, this 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 his past relevant work. Claimant's past relevant work was as an unloader, doing light industrial jobs or machine metal finisher. There is insufficient objective medical evidence upon which this Administrative Law Judge could base a finding that claimant is unable to perform work that he has engaged in, in the past. Therefore, if claimant had not already been denied at Step 2, he would again be denied at Step 4.

The Administrative Law Judge will continue to proceed through the sequential evaluation process to determine whether or not claimant has the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in his prior jobs.

At Step 5, the burden of proof shifts to the department to establish that claimant does not have residual functional capacity.

The residual functional capacity is what an individual can do despite limitations. All impairments will be considered in addition to ability to meet certain demands of jobs in the national economy. Physical demands, mental demands, sensory requirements and other functions will be evaluated.... 20 CFR 416.945(a).

To determine the physical demands (exertional requirements) of work in the national economy, we classify jobs as sedentary, light, medium and 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).

Medium work. Medium work involves lifting no more than 50 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 25 pounds. If someone can do medium work, we determine that he or she can also do sedentary and light work. 20 CFR 416.967(c).

Claimant has submitted insufficient objective medical evidence that he lacks the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in his prior employment or that he is physically unable to do at least light or sedentary tasks if demanded of him. Claimant's activities of daily living do not appear to be very limited and he should be able to perform light or sedentary work even with his impairments. The claimant's testimony as to his limitations indicates that he should be able to perform light or sedentary work.

Claimant testified on the record that he does have depression.

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).

There is insufficient objective medical/psychiatric evidence contained in the file of depression or a cognitive dysfunction that is so severe that it would prevent claimant from working at any job. In addition, based upon claimant's medical records it is documented that he had heavy use of alcohol as well as withdrawal which would have contributed to his physical and any alleged mental problems. Claimant's complaints of pain, while profound and credible, are out of proportion to the objective medical evidence contained in the file as it relates to claimant's ability to perform work. Therefore, this Administrative Law Judge finds that the objective medical evidence on the record does not establish that claimant has no residual functional capacity. Claimant is disqualified from receiving disability at Step 5 based upon the fact that he has not established by objective medical evidence that he cannot perform light or sedentary work even with his impairments. Under the Medical-Vocational a younger individual (age 34), with a less than high school education and an unskilled work history who is limited to light work is not considered disabled.

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 on the record that it was acting in compliance with department policy when it denied claimant's application for Medical Assistance and retroactive Medical Assistance benefits. The claimant should be able to perform a wide range of light or sedentary work even with his impairments. The department has established its case by a preponderance of the evidence.

Accordingly, the department's decision is AFFIRMED.

/s/

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

Date Signed: July 20, 2009

Date Mailed: July 21, 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.

LYL/vmc

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