

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. 2009-3248
Issue No: 2009; 4031
Case No: [REDACTED]
Load No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date:
February 19, 2009
Allegan County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Janice Spodarek

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 February 19, 2009. Claimant was represented at the administrative hearing by

[REDACTED].

ISSUE

Did the Department of Human Services (DHS) properly deny claimant's Medical Assistance (MA-P) and State Disability Assistance (SDA) application of April 29, 2008 including two months of retro MA--January and February, 2008?

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 April 29, 2008, claimant applied for MA-P and SDA with the Michigan DHS.
- (2) Claimant applied for January and February, 2008 retro MA.

(3) On July 16, 2008, the MRT denied.

(4) On July 21, 2008, the DHS issued notice.

(5) On October 16, 2008, claimant filed a hearing request.

(6) Claimant has an SSI application pending with the Social Security Administration (SSA).

(7) On November 12, 2008, the State Hearing Review Team (SHRT) denied claimant.

Pursuant to claimant's request to hold the record open for the submission of new and additional medical documentation, on November 10, 2009 SHRT issued a decision indicating that MRT approved claimant pursuant to a subsequent reapplication effective April, 2009. SHRT denied claimant eligibility for MA and SDA. The remaining issue reviewed herein addresses the MA and SDA eligibility for the April, 2008 application, including any retro months, until claimant was subsequently approved in April 2009.

(8) The undersigned Administrative Law Judge made repeated attempts to obtain a copy of the MRT approval. After numerous emails and correspondence, the last email being received on June 9, 2010, the undersigned Administrative Law Judge was informed that the case was transferred to Allegan. The undersigned Administrative Law Judge was informed that there was no copy of a MRT 49A. The local office was informed by the MRT that the MRT does not keep copies of prior 49As. MRT represented to the DHS that they could only confirm that they approved claimant beginning in April, 2009, with no information regarding the reason for medical condition(s) upon which approval was made.

(9) As of the date of application, claimant was a 32-year-old male standing 5'9" tall and weighing 160 pounds.

(10) Claimant testified that he does not have any alcohol or drug abuse problem.

Claimant testified that he did have a history of abuse with both alcohol and drugs approximately

three years prior to the administrative hearing. Medical evidence indicates alcohol abuse until January 1, 2008; cocaine abuse through June, 2007. Exhibit B. Claimant smokes. Claimant has a nicotine addiction.

(11) Claimant does have a driver's license and can drive a motor vehicle.

(12) Claimant is not currently working. Claimant last worked in October, 2008 assembling chairs. Claimant's work history is unskilled.

(13) Claimant alleges disability on the basis of mental disorders; kidney problems; Crohn's disease; shortness of breath; back pain; alcohol and cocaine abuse in remission; and bowel obstruction. Claimant has been diagnosed with adjustment disorder with depressed mood (309.0); schizophrenia, paranoid (295.30); alcohol abuse and cocaine abuse in remission (305.00 and 305.60). Exhibit B4.

(14) Claimant submitted over 130 pages of medical evidence along with newly submitted documentation substantiating a severe mental impairment and medical impairment. Claimant's mental impairments were severe and in existence during the months at issue herein. See Exhibits A1 through B12; Exhibits 1 through 113.

(15) Claimant's impairments met statutory disability from the April, 2008 application, and including the retro months until subsequently approved in April, 2009.

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).

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).

Statutory authority for the SDA program states in part:

- (b) A person with a physical or mental impairment which meets federal SSI disability standards, except that the minimum duration of the disability shall be 90 days. Substance abuse alone is not defined as a basis for eligibility.

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 CFR 416.901). DHS, 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. Michigan administers the federal Medicaid program. In assessing eligibility, Michigan utilizes the federal regulations.

Relevant federal guidelines provide in pertinent part:

"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.

The federal regulations require that several considerations be analyzed in sequential order:

...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.

The regulations require that if disability can be ruled out at any step, analysis of the next step is not required. These steps are:

1. 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). If no, the analysis continues to Step 2.
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 416.909(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 that meets the duration requirement? If no, the analysis continues to Step 4. If yes, MA is approved. 20 CFR 416.920(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. Sections 200.00-204.00(f)?
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? This step considers the residual functional capacity, age, education, and past work experience to see if the client can do other work. If yes, the analysis ends and the client is ineligible for MA. If no, MA is approved. 20 CFR 416.920(g).

At application claimant has the burden of proof pursuant to:

...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).

Federal regulations are very specific regarding the type of medical evidence required by claimant to establish statutory disability. The regulations essentially require laboratory or clinical

medical reports that corroborate claimant's claims or claimant's physicians' statements regarding disability. These regulations state in part:

...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 sure, X-rays);
- (4) Diagnosis (statement of disease or injury based on its signs and symptoms).... 20 CFR 416.913(b).

...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).

...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 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).

Applying the sequential analysis herein, claimant is not ineligible at the first step as claimant is not currently working. 20 CFR 416.920(b). The analysis continues.

The second step of the analysis looks at a two-fold assessment of duration and severity. 20 CFR 416.920(c). This second step is a *de minimus* standard. Ruling any ambiguities in claimant's favor, this Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) finds that claimant meets both. The analysis continues.

The third step of the analysis looks at whether an individual meets or equals one of the Listings of Impairments. 20 CFR 416.920(d).

After a careful review of the substantial credible evidence on the whole record, this ALJ finds that claimant meets or equals Listing 12.04. See Exhibit B.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the department's actions were incorrect.

Accordingly, the department's determination in this matter is REVERSED.

The department is ORDERED to make a determination if claimant meets the non-medical criteria for MA and SDA programs. If so, the department is ORDERED to open an MA and SDA case from the April, 2008 application date, including any retro MA months, and issue any supplemental benefits to claimant to which he may be entitled from the month of application until the department subsequently opened MA and SDA cases on behalf of claimant.

The department is ORDERED to review this case in accordance with its usual policy and procedure.

/S/ _____
Janice Spodarek
Administrative Law Judge
for Ismael Ahmed, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: June 30, 2010

Date Mailed: July 1, 2010

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 mailing date of the rehearing decision.

JS/tg

cc:

