

[REDACTED]

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.: 2009-354  
Issue No.: 2009, 4031  
Case No.: [REDACTED]  
Load No.: [REDACTED]  
Hearing Date:  
March 2, 2009  
Wayne County DHS [REDACTED]

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Colleen M. Mamelka

HEARING DECISION

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and MCL 400.37 upon the Claimant's request for a hearing. After due notice, a hearing was conducted from Taylor, Michigan on Monday, March 2, 2009. The Claimant appeared, along with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and testified. [REDACTED] appeared on behalf of the Department.

ISSUE

Whether the Department properly determined that the Claimant was not disabled for purposes continued entitlement to Medical Assistance (MA-P) and the State Disability Assistance (SDA) benefits.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Administrative Law Judge, based on the competent, material and substantial evidence on the whole record, finds as material fact:

1. On June 29, 2007, the Claimant submitted an application for MA-P and SDA benefits.
2. On September 26, 2007, the Medical Review Team ("MRT") found the Claimant disabled for purposes of the MA-P and SDA programs with a review date scheduled for June 2008. (Exhibit 1, pp. 30, 31)
3. On July 24, 2008, the MRT deferred a disability determination in order for the Claimant to attend a psychiatric evaluation.
4. On [REDACTED], the Claimant attended the psychiatric examination at [REDACTED]. (Exhibit 1, pp. 6–10)
5. On September 2, 2008, the MRT determined the Claimant was not disabled. (Exhibit 1, pp. 4, 5)
6. On September 3, 2008, the Department sent the Claimant an eligibility notice informing him that his MA-P benefits would terminate effective September 17, 2008. (Exhibit 1, pp. 2, 3)
7. On September 15, 2008, the Department received the Claimant's written hearing request protesting the negative action.
8. On October 9, 2008, the State Hearing Review Team ("SHRT") found the Claimant not disabled finding the September 2007 determination in error. (Exhibit 2, pp. 1, 2)
9. The Claimant's alleged mental disabling impairments are due to Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, Depression, and Bipolar Disorder.
10. The Claimant's impairment(s) have lasted and are expected to last for a period of 12 months or longer.

11. At the time of hearing, the Claimant was 24 years old with a [REDACTED] birth date; was 5'9" and weighed 174 pounds.
12. The Claimant completed through the 9<sup>th</sup> grade under a special education curriculum.
13. The Claimant's limited work history includes employment at a fast food restaurant and a janitor.

#### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Medical Assistance ("MA") program is established by Subchapter XIX of Chapter 7 of The Public Health & Welfare Act, 42 USC 1397, and is administered by the Department of Human Services ("DHS"), formally known as the Family Independence Agency, 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 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) 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 his or her medical history, clinical/laboratory findings, diagnosis/prescribed treatment, prognosis for recovery and/or medical assessment of ability to do work-related activities or ability to reason and make appropriate mental adjustments, if a mental disability is alleged. 20 CFR 413.913 An individual's subjective pain complaints are not, in and of themselves, sufficient to establish disability. 20 CFR 416.908; 20 CFR 416.929(a) Similarly, conclusory statements by a

physician or mental health professional that an individual is disabled or blind, absent supporting medical evidence, is insufficient to establish disability. 20 CFR 416.929(a)

When determining disability, the federal regulations require several factors to be considered including: (1) the location/duration/frequency/intensity of an applicant's pain; (2) the type/dosage/effectiveness/side effects of any medication the applicants takes to relieve pain; (3) any treatment other than pain medication that the applicant has received to relieve pain; and (4) the effect of the applicant's pain on his or her ability to do basic work activities. 20 CFR 416.929(c) (3) The applicant's pain must be assessed to determine the extent of his or her functional limitation(s) in light of the objective medical evidence presented. 20 CFR 416.929(c) (2)

Once an individual has been found disabled for purposes of MA benefits, continued entitlement is periodically reviewed in order to make a current determination or decision as to whether disability remains in accordance with the medical improvement review standard. 20 CFR 416.993(a); 20 CFR 416.994 In evaluating a claim for ongoing MA benefits, federal regulation require a sequential evaluation process be utilized. 20 CFR 416.994(b)(5) The review may cease and benefits continued if sufficient evidence supports a finding that an individual is still unable to engage in substantial gainful activity. *Id.* Prior to deciding an individual's disability has ended, the department will develop, along with the Claimant's cooperation, a complete medical history covering at least the 12 months preceding the date the individual signed a request seeking continuing disability benefits. 20 CFR 416.993(b) The department may order a consultative examination to determine whether or not the disability continues. 20 CFR 416.993(c)

The first step in the analysis in determining whether an individual's disability has ended requires the trier of fact to consider the severity of the impairment(s) and whether it meets or equals a listed impairment in Appendix 1 of subpart P of part 404 of Chapter 20. 20 CFR 416.994(b) (5) (i) If a Listing is met, an individual's disability is found to continue with no further analysis required.

If the impairment(s) does not meet or equal a Listing, then Step 2 requires a determination of whether there has been medical improvement as defined in 20 CFR 416.994(b)(1); 20 CFR 416.994(b)(5)(ii) Medical improvement is defined as any decrease in the medical severity of the impairment(s) which was present at the time of the most favorable medical decision that the individual was disabled or continues to be disabled. 20 CFR 416.994(b) (1) (i) If no medical improvement found, and no exception applies (see listed exceptions below), then an individual's disability is found to continue. Conversely, if medical improvement is found, Step 3 calls for a determination of whether there has been an increase in the residual functional capacity ('RFC') based on the impairment(s) that were present at the time of the most favorable medical determination. 20 CFR 416.994(b)(5)(iii)

If medical improvement is not related to the ability to work, Step 4 evaluates whether any listed exception applies. 20 CFR 416.994(b)(5)(iv) If no exception is applicable, disability is found to continue. *Id.* If the medical improvement *is* related to an individual's ability to do work, then a determination of whether an individual's impairment(s) are severe is made. 20 CFR 416.994(b)(5)(iii), (v) If severe, an assessment of an individual's residual functional capacity to perform past work is made. 20 CFR 416.994(b) (5) (vi) If an individual can perform past relevant work, disability does not continue. *Id.* Similarly, when evidence establishes that the impairment(s) do (does) not significantly limit an individual's physical or mental abilities to do

basic work activities, continuing disability will not be found. 20 CFR 416.994(b)(5)(v) Finally, if an individual is unable to perform past relevant work, vocational factors such as the individual's age, education, and past work experience are considered in determining whether despite the limitations an individual is able to perform other work. 20 CFR 416.994(b)(5)(vii) Disability ends if an individual is able to perform other work. *Id.*

The first group of exceptions (as mentioned above) to medical improvement (i.e., when disability can be found to have ended even though medical improvement has not occurred) found in 20 CFR 416.994(b) (3) are as follows:

- (i) Substantial evidence shows that the individual is the beneficiary of advances in medical or vocational therapy or technology (related to the ability to work);
- (ii) Substantial evidence shows that the individual has undergone vocational therapy related to the ability to work;
- (iii) Substantial evidence shows that based on new or improved diagnostic or evaluative techniques the impairment(s) is not as disabling as previously determined at the time of the most recent favorable decision;
- (iv) Substantial evidence demonstrates that any prior disability decision was in error.

The second group of exceptions [20 CFR 416.994(b) (4)] to medical improvement are as follows:

- (i) A prior determination was fraudulently obtained;
- (ii) The individual failed to cooperate;
- (iii) The individual cannot be located;
- (iv) The prescribed treatment that was expected to restore the individual's ability to engage in substantial gainful activity was not followed.

If an exception from the second group listed above is applicable, a determination that the individual's disability has ended is made. 20 CFR 416.994(b) (5) (iv) The second group of exceptions to medical improvement may be considered at any point in the process. *Id.*

As discussed above, the first step in the sequential evaluation process to determine whether the Claimant's disability continues looks at the severity of the impairment(s) and whether

it meets or equals a listed impairment in Appendix 1. In this case, the Claimant was previously found to meet Listing 12.04.

Listing 12.00 encompasses adult mental disorders. The evaluation of disability on the basis of mental disorders requires documentation of a medically determinable impairment(s) and consideration of the degree in which the impairment limits the individual's ability to work, and whether these limitations have lasted or are expected to last for a continuous period of at least 12 months. 12.00A The existence of a medically determinable impairment(s) of the required duration must be established through medical evidence consisting of symptoms, signs, and laboratory findings, to include psychological test findings. 12.00B The evaluation of disability on the basis of a mental disorder requires sufficient evidence to (1) establish the presence of a medically determinable mental impairment(s), (2) assess the degree of functional limitation the impairment(s) imposes, and (3) project the probable duration of the impairment(s). 12.00D The evaluation of disability on the basis of mental disorders requires documentation of a medically determinable impairment(s) and consideration of the degree in which the impairment limits the individual's ability to work consideration, and whether these limitations have lasted or are expected to last for a continuous period of at least 12 months. 12.00A

Listing 12.04 defines affective disorders as being characterized by a disturbance of mood, accompanied by a full or partial manic or depressive syndrome. Generally, affective disorders involve either depression or elation. The required level of severity for these disorders are met when the requirements of both A and B are satisfied, or when the requirements in C are satisfied.

- A. Medically documented persistence, either continuous or intermittent, of one of the following:
  - 1. Depressive syndrome characterized by at least four of the following:
    - a. Anhedonia or pervasive loss of interest in almost all activities; or

- b. Appetite disturbance with change in weight; or
  - c. Sleep disturbance; or
  - d. Psychomotor agitation or retardation; or
  - e. Decreased energy; or
  - f. Feelings of guilt or worthlessness; or
  - g. Difficulty concentrating or thinking; or
  - h. Thoughts of suicide; or
  - i. Hallucinations, delusions, or paranoid thinking; or
2. Manic syndrome characterized by at least three of the following:
- a. Hyperactivity; or
  - b. Pressure of speech; or
  - c. Flight of ideas; or
  - d. Inflated self-esteem; or
  - e. Decreased need for sleep; or
  - f. Easy distractability; or
  - g. Involvement in activities that have a high probability of painful consequences which are not recognized; or
  - h. Hallucinations, delusions, or paranoid thinking; or
3. Bipolar syndrome with a history of episodic periods manifested by the full symptomatic picture of both manic and depressive syndromes (and currently characterized by either or both syndromes)

AND

- B. Resulting in at least two of the following:
- 1. Marked restriction on activities of daily living; or
  - 2. Marked difficulties in maintaining social functioning; or
  - 3. Marked difficulties in maintaining concentration, persistence, or pace; or
  - 4. Repeated episodes of decompensation, each of extended duration;

OR

- C. Medically documented history of chronic affective disorder of at least 2 years' duration that has caused more than a minimal limitation of ability to do basic work activities, with symptoms or signs currently attenuated by medication or psychosocial support, and one of the following:



1. Repeated episodes of decompensation, each of extended duration; or
2. A residual disease process that has resulted in such marginal adjustment that even minimal increase in mental demands or change in the environment would be predicted to cause the individual to decompensate; or
3. Current history of 1 or more years' inability to function outside a highly supportive living arrangement, with an indication of continued need for such an arrangement.

On [REDACTED], the Claimant's treating psychiatrist (for the last 10 years) completed a Psychiatric/Psychological Examination Report on behalf of the Claimant. The Claimant's Global Assessment Functioning was 35 and he was found markedly limited in all areas listed on the Mental Residual Functioning Assessment, noting that the Claimant's baseline functioning has not changed over the last 10 years.

On [REDACTED], the Claimant's treating psychiatrist submitted a Psychiatric/Psychological Examination Report on behalf of the Claimant. The Claimant's Mental Residual Functional Capacity Assessment documented the Claimant as markedly limited in all areas except his ability to understand, remember, and carry out one or twostep simple instructions, which was moderately limited. The Claimant's GAF was 40–45.

On [REDACTED], the Claimant attended a department ordered consultative psychiatric examination. The Claimant's mental impairment(s) were noted and found to be stable. The Claimant's prognosis was fair and his GAF was 55. During the hearing, several inaccuracies were pointed out regarding this particular evaluation and great weight is given to the Claimant's long-term treating psychiatrist.

Ultimately, it is found that the Claimant's mental impairments meet or are the equivalent of Listing 12.04. Accordingly, the Claimant's disability is found to continue therefore no further analysis is required.

The State Disability Assistance (“SDA”) program, which provides financial assistance for disabled persons, was established by 2004 PA 344. DHS administers the SDA program pursuant to MCL 400.10 *et seq.* and Michigan Administrative Code (“MAC R”) 400.3151 – 400.3180. Department policies are found in PAM, PEM, and PRM. A person is considered disabled for SDA purposes 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.

In this case, the Claimant is found disabled for purposes of continued Medical Assistance (“MA-P”) entitlement, therefore the Claimant’s is found disabled for purposes of continued SDA benefits.

#### DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the findings of fact and conclusions of law, finds the Claimant disabled for purposes of continued Medical Assistance program and the State Disability Assistance program.

It is ORDERED:

1. The Department’s determination is REVERSED.
2. The Department shall initiate review of the redetermination application to determine if all other non-medical criteria are met and inform the Claimant of the determination.
3. The Department shall supplement the Claimant any lost benefits he was entitled to receive if otherwise eligible and qualified in accordance with department policy.
4. The Department shall review the Claimant’s continued eligibility in March 2010 in accordance with department policy.

/s/  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Colleen M. Mamelka  
Administrative Law Judge  
For Ishmael Ahmed, Director  
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: 03/10/09

Date Mailed: 03/11/09

**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 the Circuit 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.

CM/jlg

cc:

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the names and contact information of the recipients listed under the 'cc:' field.