

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: 2009-5085
Issue No: 2009/4031
Case No: [REDACTED]
Load No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date:
February 24, 2009
Houghton County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Marlene B. Magyar

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 February 24, 2009. Claimant personally appeared and testified.

ISSUE

Did the department properly determine claimant is not disabled by Medicaid (MA) and State Disability Assistance (SDA) eligibility standards?

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

(1) Claimant is a single, right-handed, 25-year-old high school graduate with an unskilled work history who is medically restricted from driving due to a seizure disorder, first diagnosed in [REDACTED] secondary to head injury (Department Exhibit #1, pgs 3, 5, 6, 11, 19, 40 and 42).

(2) Claimant stands approximately 5'11" tall and weighs approximately 160 pounds (Department Exhibit #1, pgs 5 and 41).

(3) On October 1, 2008, claimant applied disability-based MA/SDA because he was fired from his job at [REDACTED] the previous month for having a seizure at work (Department Exhibit #1, pg 6).

(4) Claimant has had intermittent seizure activity while driving, working, being in stores and walking outside (Department Exhibit #1, pg 10).

(5) Claimant's family physician completed a [REDACTED] on [REDACTED] listing no physical impairment other than seizure disorder and no physical limitations because of it (Department Exhibit #1, pgs 11 and 12).

(6) The medication which seems to help best in seizure control is [REDACTED]; claimant's dosage was increased recently from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] daily, per self report (Department Exhibit #1, pgs 19 and 21).

(7) Claimant's most recent seizure activity occurred in mid-[REDACTED] while shoveling snow; he was advised not to engage strenuous (heavy) exertional activity as the treating physician opined that may have triggered his seizure.

(8) A brain [REDACTED] taken at that time also verified a benign tumor behind claimant's left eye, per self report.

(9) Claimant is taking no other prescription medications except [REDACTED], prescribed by his family doctor to assist him in dealing with his seizure diagnosis.

(10) Claimant is not currently engaged in any mental health treatment or counseling; additionally, he alleges no severe mental/emotional/cognitive impairments and none are evidenced by the records submitted to date (Department Exhibit #1, pgs 1-135).

(11) A [REDACTED] record dated [REDACTED] indicates claimant has [REDACTED] seizures about every one to two months; he acknowledged at hearing his episodes are unpredictable (Department Exhibit #1, pg 23).

(12) This report also states in relevant part:

Your tegretol level in you blood is unmeasurable, meaning you are often forgetting to take it. It was prescribed by a doctor downstate in [REDACTED]. Your girlfriend says there are pills left in the bottle. I suggest that you resume taking it as prescribed and don't forget doses or you are more likely to have further seizures (Department Exhibit #1, pg 26).

(13) In [REDACTED], claimant was treated in the [REDACTED] for a bone-deep, left fifth finger laceration which occurred while he was inebriated (Department Exhibit #1, pgs 30 and 31).

(14) On [REDACTED], claimant underwent an independent physical examination which states in relevant part:

This claimant has a history of substance abuse and many conflicts with the legal system. He had four arrests due to marijuana possession leading to his jail confinement from [REDACTED] 0 hours. On one occasion he was jailed for two days following accusations against him of domestic violence. On [REDACTED] he was jailed for [REDACTED] hours for driving with a suspended license. His license was suspended in [REDACTED] due to his seizure disorder and he has to be seizure free for a period of six months for the license to be reinstated. He has a history of tobacco abuse; one or two packs per day during the last five years. He experimented with cocaine only twice 2-5 years ago. He has been abusing alcohol for a considerable period of time, especially in weekends, consuming 12-15 cans of beer in two days. The last abuse of alcohol occurred last weekend. He started to abuse alcohol at the age of 17.

PROGNOSIS: In spite of his repeated brushes with the legal system and the recognition of possession of marijuana and illegal substance, claimant seemed to maintain that the use of marijuana by him is appropriate because it relaxes him. Unless he actively participates in a drug rehabilitation program, the prognosis is indefinite (Department Exhibit #1, pgs 48 and 50).

(15) In [REDACTED] emergency treatment record notes claimant's seizure activity occurred because he was non-compliant with [REDACTED], which was a medication formerly prescribed for his seizure management (Department Exhibit #1, pg 54)(See also Finding of Fact #12 above).

(16) Discharge restrictions at that time were not to ride a bike, drive a car, go swimming, climb in high or dangerous places such as ladders or roofs, or operate any dangerous equipment without his doctor's permission (Department Exhibit #1, pgs 55 and 56).

(17) When the department denied claimant's [REDACTED] MA/SDA application based on his failure to meet the criteria necessary for a disability allowance, he filed a hearing request dated [REDACTED]

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).

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

The SDA program differs from the federal MA regulations in that the durational requirement is 90 days. This means that the person's impairments must meet the SSI disability standards for 90 days in order for that person to be eligible for SDA benefits.

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 to make appropriate mental adjustments, if a mental disability is being alleged, 20 CFR 416.913. An individual's subjective pain complaints are not, in and of themselves, sufficient to establish disability. 20 CFR 416.908 and 20 CFR 416.929. By the same token, 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 416.929.

...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).

...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).

...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).

...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).

...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).

All of the evidence relevant to the claim, including medical opinions, is reviewed and findings are made. 20 CFR 416.927(c).

If an individual fails to follow prescribed treatment which would be expected to restore their ability to engage in substantial gainful activity without good cause, there will not be a finding of disability.... 20 CFR 416.994(b)(4)(iv).

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).

Claimant does not qualify for the MA/SDA coverage he seeks because he has not established the existence of a medical condition severe enough to prevent substantial gainful employment for a continuous period of at least 12 months for MA, or even 90 days for SDA. Claimant's sole basis for alleging disability is based on his intermittent seizures.

Claimant is physically independent in all activities of daily living and no mental impairments have been shown. Furthermore, claimant's records verify a history of non-compliance with the prescription medications used to reduce the frequency of seizure activity. In short, while this impairment may prevent claimant from working around dangerous machinery or unprotected heights, it would not prevent him from engaging in any number of unskilled jobs currently existing in the national economy, which is the standard to be applied in disability determination cases. As such, claimant's disputed application must remain denied in concurrence with the department's State Hearing Review Team (SHRT) decision, dated December 9, 2008.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides the department properly determined claimant is not disabled by MA/SDA eligibility standards.

Accordingly, the department's action is AFFIRMED.

/s/

Marlene B. Magyar
Administrative Law Judge
for Ismael Ahmed, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed:  _____

Date Mailed:  _____

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.

MBM/db

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