

STATE OF MICHIGAN
STATE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg No. 200912811
Issue No. 2009
Case No. [REDACTED]
Load No. [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: September 22, 2009
Emmet County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Jana A. Bachman

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 September 22, 2009. Claimant was represented by [REDACTED]

ISSUE

Whether claimant has established disability for Medical Assistance (MA).

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. November 14, 2008, claimant applied for MA.
2. December 16, 2008, the Medical Review Team (MRT) denied claimant's application.
3. December 19, 2008, the department sent claimant written notice that the application was denied.

4. January 9, 2009, the department received claimant's timely request for hearing.
5. March 4, 2009, the State Hearing Review Team (SHRT) denied claimant's application. Department Exhibit B.
6. September 22, 2009, the in-person hearing was held. Prior to the close of the record, claimant submitted additional medical evidence. Claimant waived the right to a timely hearing decision. September 30, 2009 after review of all medical evidence, the SHRT again denied claimant's application. SHRT Decision, 9-30-09.
7. Claimant asserts disability based on impairments caused by lupus, fibromyalgia, leg and back problems, learning disabilities, and liver disease.
8. Claimant testified at hearing. Claimant is 38 years old, 4'9" tall, and weighs 145 pounds. She completed high school and was in special education due to a head injury. Claimant is able to read and write. Math skills are poor. Claimant has a driver's license and is able to drive. Claimant cares for her needs at home.
9. Claimant's past relevant employment has been as a grocery store bagger, childcare provider, and patient sitter.
10. May 13, 2009, claimant underwent a liver biopsy that revealed mild portal, lobular inflammation and mild portal fibrosis. Claimant Exhibit A, pgs 1-3.
11. September 24, 2004, claimant was examined by a neurologist who wrote a letter to her family physician. The letter indicates that neurologist believes her pain symptoms myofascial and muscular. Nothing in the exam to suggest radiculopathy or myelopathy. MRIs of the cervical spine show minor abnormality at C3-4, 4-5 and many degenerative changes as anyone patient's age could have. There is a very small left sided disc protrusion at 5-6 which is not compressing the cord or the nerve roots. Lumbar MRI is unremarkable as thoracic MRI. On physical exam, patient has restricted motion of the cervical and lumbar spine due to paraspinous tightness and tenderness. Claimant Exhibit A, pgs 21-22.

12. May 24, 2007, claimant underwent blood testing that revealed negative test for lupus Claimant Exhibit A, pg 116.
13. December 28, 2007, claimant underwent an abdominal ultrasound that revealed splenomegaly. Claimant Exhibit A, pg 85. December 17, 2006, claimant underwent a physical examination. Treatment notes indicate a normal physical exam with the exception of multiple granulomas on right leg, urticaria, skin thickening of the right leg, subcutaneous nodules right leg. Doctor indicates diagnosis of rash, granuloma annulare. Report indicates claimant has systemic lupus erythematosus. Claimant Exhibit A, pgs 75-76.
14. On or about January 24, 1984, claimant was in a motor vehicle accident and suffered a contusion to her forehead and a closed-head injury. Claimant Exhibit A, pgs 10-20, 23-24.

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).

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).

If an individual fails to cooperate by appearing for a physical or mental examination by a certain date without good cause, there will not be a finding of disability. 20 CFR 416.994(b)(4)(ii).

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 so is not disqualified from receiving disability at Step 1.

At Step 2, as a child, claimant suffered a contusion to the forehead and a closed-head injury. The objective medical evidence of record indicates that claimant has lupus. However, subsequent medical testing indicate claimant does not have lupus. Regardless of whether claimant does have lupus or does not have lupus, the objective medical evidence of record does not indicate that claimant has severe impairments due to this or any other condition. The objective medical evidence of record indicates that claimant has mild portal and lobular inflammation in the liver. She has mild portal fibrosis in the liver. She also has minimal degenerative changes in the cervical spine. Finding of Fact 10-14.

At Step 2, the objective medical evidence of record is not sufficient to establish that claimant has severe impairments that have lasted or are expected to last 12 months or more and prevent employment at any job for 12 months or more. Therefore, claimant is disqualified from receiving disability at Step 2.

At Step 3, claimant's impairments do not rise to the level necessary to be specifically disabling by law. BRIDGES SOLQ Report, 9-13-2010.

At Step 4, claimant's past relevant employment has been as a grocery store bagger, childcare provider, and patient sitter. See discussion at Step 2 above. Finding of Fact 9-14.

At Step 4, the objective medical evidence of record is not sufficient to establish that claimant has functional impairments that prevent claimant for a period of 12 months or more from engaging in a full range of duties required by claimant's past relevant employment. Therefore, claimant is disqualified from receiving disability at Step 4.

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).

Heavy work. Heavy work involves lifting no more than 100 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 50 pounds. If someone can do heavy work, we determine that he or she can also do medium, light, and sedentary work. 20 CFR 416.967(d).

At Step 5, see discussion at Step 2 above. Finding of Fact 8-14.

At Step 5, the objective medical evidence of record is sufficient to establish that claimant retains the residual functional capacity to perform unskilled work activities. Accordingly, claimant is not disabled. Therefore, claimant is disqualified from receiving disability at Step 5.

