

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.: 2009-14766
Issue No.: 2009, 4031
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Load No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date:
July 20, 2009
Wayne County DHS (17)

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 Detroit, Michigan on July 20, 2009. The Claimant appeared and testified, along with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] appeared on behalf of the Department.

ISSUE

Whether the Department properly determined that the Claimant was not disabled for purposes of Medical Assistance ("MA") and State Disability Assistance ("SDA") programs?

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. The Claimant submitted an application for public assistance seeking Medical Assistance ("MA-P") and State Disability Assistance ("SDA") benefits on November 26, 2008.
2. On January 15, 2009, the Medical Review Team ("MRT") determined the Claimant was not disabled for purposes of the MA-P and SDA benefits. (Exhibit 1, pp. 8, 9)

3. On January 23, 2009, the Department sent an Eligibility Notice to the Claimant informing her that she was found not disabled. (Exhibit 1, p. 6)
4. On January 30, 2009, the Department received the Claimant's written Request for Hearing. (Exhibit 1, pp. 2 – 5)
5. On March 16, 2009, the State Hearing Review Team ("SHRT") determined the Claimant not disabled finding the Claimant capable of performing unskilled, medium work. (Exhibit 2)
6. The Claimant's alleged physical disabling impairment(s) are due to back pain, hypertension, anemia, coronary artery disease, pulmonary embolism, sleep apnea, uterine fibroid, and diabetes mellitus
7. The Claimant's alleged mental impairments are due to depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder.
8. At the time of hearing, the Claimant was 50 years old with an [REDACTED] birth date; was 5'3" in height; and weighed 246 pounds.
9. The Claimant is a high school graduate with 2 years of college and a limited work history performing general labor.
10. The Claimant's impairment(s) have lasted, or are expected to last, continuously for a period of 12-months or longer.

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)

In order to determine whether or not an individual is disabled, federal regulations require a five-step sequential evaluation process be utilized. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(1) The five-step analysis requires the trier of fact to consider an individual's current work activity; the severity of the impairment(s) both in duration and whether it meets or equals a listed impairment in Appendix 1; residual functional capacity to determine whether an individual can perform past relevant work; and residual functional capacity along with vocational factors (i.e. age, education, and work experience) to determine if an individual can adjust to other work. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(4); 20 CFR 416.945

If an individual is found disabled, or not disabled, at any step, a determination or decision is made with no need evaluate subsequent steps. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(4) If a determination cannot be made that an individual is disabled, or not disabled, at a particular step, the next step is required. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(4) If an impairment does not meet or equal a listed impairment, an individual's residual functional capacity is assessed before moving from step three to step four. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(4); 20 CFR 416.945 Residual functional capacity is the most an individual can do despite the limitations based on all relevant evidence. 20 CFR 945(a)(1) An individual's residual functional capacity assessment is evaluated at both steps four and five. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(4) In determining disability, an individual's functional capacity to perform basic work activities is evaluated and if found that the individual has the ability to perform basic work activities without significant limitation, disability will not be found. 20 CFR 416.994(b)(1)(iv) In general, the individual has the responsibility to prove disability. 20 CFR 416.912(a) An impairment or combination of impairments is not severe if it does not significantly limit an individual's physical or mental ability to do basic work activities. 20 CFR 416.921(a) The individual has the responsibility to provide evidence of prior work experience; efforts to work;

and any other factor showing how the impairment affects the ability to work. 20 CFR 416.912(c)(3)(5)(6)

In addition to the above, when evaluating mental impairments, a special technique is utilized. 20 CFR 416.920a(a) First, an individual's pertinent symptoms, signs, and laboratory findings are evaluated to determine whether a medically determinable mental impairment exists. 20 CFR 416.920a(b)(1) When a medically determinable mental impairment is established, the symptoms, signs and laboratory findings that substantiate the impairment are documented to include the individual's significant history, laboratory findings, and functional limitations. 20 CFR 416.920a(e)(2) Functional limitation(s) is assessed based upon the extent to which the impairment(s) interferes with an individual's ability to function independently, appropriately, effectively, and on a sustained basis. *Id.*; 20 CFR 416.920a(c)(2) Chronic mental disorders, structured settings, medication, and other treatment and the effect on the overall degree of functionality is considered. 20 CFR 416.920a(c)(1) In addition, four broad functional areas (activities of daily living; social functioning; concentration, persistence or pace; and episodes of decompensation) are considered when determining an individual's degree of functional limitation. 20 CFR 416.920a(c)(3) The degree of limitation for the first three functional areas is rated by a five point scale: none, mild, moderate, marked, and extreme. 20 CFR 416.920a(c)(4) A four point scale (none, one or two, three, four or more) is used to rate the degree of limitation in the fourth functional area. *Id.* The last point on each scale represents a degree of limitation that is incompatible with the ability to do any gainful activity. *Id.*

After the degree of functional limitation is determined, the severity of the mental impairment is determined. 20 CFR 416.920a(d) If severe, a determination of whether the impairment meets or is the equivalent of a listed mental disorder. 20 CFR 416.920a(d)(2) If the

severe mental impairment does not meet (or equal) a listed impairment, an individual's residual functional capacity is assessed. 20 CFR 416.920a(d)(3)

As outlined above, the first step looks at the individual's current work activity. An individual is not disabled regardless of the medical condition, age, education, and work experience, if the individual is working and the work is a substantial, gainful activity. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(4)(i) In the record presented, the Claimant is not involved in substantial gainful activity and last worked in 2005. Accordingly, the Claimant is not ineligible for disability under Step 1.

The severity of the Claimant's alleged impairment(s) is considered under Step 2. The Claimant bears the burden to present sufficient objective medical evidence to substantiate the alleged disabling impairments. In order to be considered disabled for MA purposes, the impairment must be severe. 20 CFR 916.920(a)(4)(ii); 20 CFR 916.920(b) An impairment, or combination of impairments, is severe if it significantly limits an individual's physical or mental ability to do basic work activities regardless of age, education and work experience. 20 CFR 916.920(a)(4)(ii); 20 CFR 916.920(c) Basic work activities means the abilities and aptitudes necessary to do most jobs. 20 CFR 916.921(b) Examples 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.

Id. The second step allows for dismissal of a disability claim obviously lacking in medical merit. *Higgs v Bowen*, 880 F2d 860, 862 (CA 6, 1988). The severity requirement may still be employed as an administrative convenience to screen out claims that are totally groundless solely from a medical standpoint. *Id.* at 863 citing *Farris v Sec of Health and Human Services*, 773 F2d 85, 90 n.1 (CA 6, 1985) An impairment qualifies as non-severe only if, regardless of a claimant's age, education, or work experience, the impairment would not affect the claimant's ability to work. *Salmi v Sec of Health and Human Services*, 774 F2d 685, 692 (CA 6, 1985)

In the present case, the Claimant asserts physical and mental disability based on back pain, hypertension, anemia, coronary artery disease, pulmonary embolism, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety, sleep apnea, uterine fibroid, and diabetes mellitus.

On [REDACTED], the Claimant attended a psychiatric evaluation which diagnosed the Claimant with bipolar and anxiety disorders and depression. The Global Assessment Functioning ("GAF") was 35-40.

On [REDACTED], the Claimant was examined by a neurologist for a determination of whether she remained disabled pursuant to a prior employer's insurance carrier. The primary diagnosis was cervical and lumbar radiculitis, secondary to manic depression. The Claimant was found able to sit and stand up to 1 hour in a workplace setting but unable to walk for this same period. The Claimant was found able to occasionally lift/carry 20 pounds. Ultimately, the neurologist opined that the Claimant was totally disabled.

On [REDACTED], a Medical Examination Report was completed by an Internist on behalf of the Claimant. The current diagnoses were hypertension, anemia, coronary artery disease, pulmonary embolism, bipolar disorder, sleep apnea, uterine fibroid, and diabetes mellitus. The Claimant's condition was noted as deteriorating finding her able to occasionally

lift/carry less than 10 pounds requiring a cane for walking and was unable to perform repetitive actions with her extremities. Mental limitations were also documented.

On [REDACTED], the Claimant's treating physician completed a medical assessment of the Claimant which limited the Claimant to occasionally lifting/carrying 2 pounds; standing and/or waking approximately one hour during an 8-hour workday; and noting environmental situation restrictions due to generalized weakness. The Claimant was determined to be totally disabled from work.

On [REDACTED], the Claimant attended a psychiatric evaluation. The current diagnoses were bipolar disorder, depression, and anxiety. The Claimant adherence to prescribed treatment/therapy was also documented. The Claimant was found to be markedly limited in her ability to perform activities of daily living; maintain social functioning; concentrate, persist/pace which would result in frequent failure to complete tasks in a timely manner. The Claimant's Global Assessment Functioning ("GAF") was between 35 and 40 and she was found unable to deal with the public, work stress, and/or maintain attention/concentration.

On [REDACTED], a Psychiatric/Psychological Examination Report was completed on behalf of the Claimant. The Claimant's medication was documented as needing review every 6 weeks with her GAF listed as 36.

On [REDACTED], the Claimant attended a department ordered internist examination. The physical examination documented all movements of the cervical spine as painful but with no limitation of movement except right lateral movement. Flexion of the lumbar spine was 30 degrees; extension was 10 degrees; lateral bending and rotation were 15 degrees; straight leg raise test was 85 degrees bilaterally with pain noted throughout the examination. Flexion of the hip was restricted to 85 degrees with extension of 20 degrees. Flexion of the knee

was 120 degrees with no pain noted. Without her cane, the Claimant was found able to ambulate in short, slow paces. Ultimately, the Claimant was found with diabetes mellitus (controlled), hypertension (controlled), and osteoarthritis of the cervical and lumbar spine, previous CVA with no residual palsy.

On [REDACTED], the Claimant's treating physician authored a note stating that the Claimant treats for hypertension, coronary artery disease, pulmonary embolism, anemia, previous cardio-vascular accident, hypercholesterol, bipolar disorder, depression, and peripheral artery disease. The physician opined that the Claimant was totally and permanently disabled.

On [REDACTED], the Claimant's treating physician authored a letter stating the Claimant treats for coronary artery disease, heart failure, peripheral arterial disease, and carotid arterial stenosis. An angiogram confirmed 95% blockage of the carotid artery. Further, as a result of a stroke in the area of the carotid artery, the Claimant suffers from chronic neurological left-side deficiencies.

On [REDACTED], a letter was authored on behalf of the Claimant which stated that the Claimant treated for diabetic neuritis, peripheral vascular disease, sensory and autonomic neuropath from diabetes, ingrown town nails, and osteoarthritis in both ankle joints.

On [REDACTED], another of the Claimant's treating physicians authored a letter providing that the Claimant has multiple medical problems to include hypertension, with history of stroke, diabetes mellitus, bipolar disorder, pulmonary embolism, and the need for a hysterectomy to treat her menorrhagia and severe anemia.

On [REDACTED], a Psychiatric Report was completed on behalf of the Claimant. The diagnoses were listed as bipolar disorder, generalized anxiety, and depression. These impairments were found disabling and expected to last indefinitely. Compliance with the

prescribed treatment was also noted. The Claimant was found to be markedly limited in her ability to perform activities of daily living; maintain social functioning; concentrate, persist/pace which would result in frequent failure to complete tasks in a timely manner. The Claimant's Global Assessment Functioning was between 35 and 40. The Psychiatrist opined that the Claimant was totally disabled and unable to make occupational adjustments.

On [REDACTED], a treating physician completed the Social Security Attending Physician's Statement which listed the Claimant's impairments as high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, carotid artery, pulmonary embolism, stenosis, anemia, and major depression. The Claimant required complete freedom to rest frequently without restrictions and she was unable to perform repetitive actions with her hands/arms.

On [REDACTED], a MRI of the Claimant's lumbar spine was performed which revealed an enlarged uterus reaching up to the L4 vertebral; disc herniation at L4-L5 centrally and bilaterally in the L4 neural foramina without spinal stenosis; bilateral narrowing of the L4 neural foramen; and mild disc herniation in the L3 neural foramina bilaterally. Mild lateral herniation at L3-L4 in the anterior-inferior aspect of bilateral L3 neural foramen.

On this same date, a MRI of the Claimant's cervical spine was also performed. The results documented two level disc herniations at C5-C6 in the left paramedian location with mild cord compression on the left anterior aspect with diffuse mild herniation of disc at C6-C7 level without cord compression. In addition, herniation of disc in the mouth of the left C6 neural foramen was noted.

As previously noted, the Claimant bears the burden to present sufficient objective medical evidence to substantiate the alleged disabling impairment(s). As summarized above, the Claimant has presented some medical evidence establishing that she does have some physical

and mental limitations on her ability to perform basic work activities. The medical evidence has established that the Claimant has an impairment, or combination thereof, that has more than a *de minimis* effect on the Claimant's basic work activities. Further, the impairments have lasted continuously for twelve months; therefore, the Claimant is not disqualified from receipt of MA-P benefits under Step 2.

In the third step of the sequential analysis of a disability claim, the trier of fact must determine if the Claimant's impairment, or combination of impairments, is listed in Appendix 1 of Subpart P of 20 CFR, Part 404. The Claimant has alleged physical and mental disabling impairments due back pain, hypertension, anemia, coronary artery disease, pulmonary embolism, bipolar disorder, sleep apnea, uterine fibroid, and diabetes mellitus.

Listing 1.00 defines musculoskeletal system impairments. Disorders of the musculoskeletal system may result from hereditary, congenital, or acquired pathologic processes. 1.00A Impairments may result from infectious, inflammatory, or degenerative processes, traumatic or developmental events, or neoplastic, vascular, or toxic/metabolic diseases. 1.00A Regardless of the cause(s) of a musculoskeletal impairment, functional loss for purposes of these listings is defined as the inability to ambulate effectively on a sustained basis for any reason, including pain associated with the underlying musculoskeletal impairment, or the inability to perform fine and gross movements effectively on a sustained basis for any reason, including pain associated with the underlying musculoskeletal impairment. Inability to ambulate effectively means an extreme limitation of the ability to walk; i.e., an impairment(s) that interferes very seriously with the individual's ability to independently initiate, sustain, or complete activities. 1.00B2b(1) Ineffective ambulation is defined generally as having insufficient lower extremity function to permit independent ambulation without the use of a hand-held assistive device(s) that

limits the functioning of both upper extremities. (Listing 1.05C is an exception to this general definition because the individual has the use of only one upper extremity due to amputation of a hand.) *Id.* To ambulate effectively, individuals must be capable of sustaining a reasonable walking pace over a sufficient distance to be able to carry out activities of daily living. 1.00B2b(2) They must have the ability to travel without companion assistance to and from a place of employment or school. . . . *Id.* When an individual's impairment involves a lower extremity uses a hand-held assistive device, such as a cane, crutch or walker, the medical basis for use of the device should be documented. 1.00J4 The requirement to use a hand-held assistive device may also impact an individual's functional capacity by virtue of the fact that one or both upper extremities are not available for such activities as lifting, carrying, pushing, and pulling. *Id.*

Categories of Musculoskeletal include:

- 1.02 Major dysfunction of a joint(s) due to any cause: Characterized by gross anatomical deformity (e.g. subluxation, contracture, bony or fibrous ankylosis, instability) and chronic joint pain and stiffness with signs of limitation of motion or other abnormal motion of the affected joint(s), and findings on appropriate medically acceptable imaging of joint space narrowing, bony destruction, or ankylosis of the affected joint(s). With:
- A. Involvement of one major peripheral weight-bearing joint (i.e., hip, knee, or ankle), resulting in inability to ambulate effectively as defined in 1.00B2b; or
 - B. Involvement of one major peripheral joint in each upper extremity (i.e., shoulder, elbow, wrist, hand), resulting in inability to perform fine and gross movements effectively a defined in 1.00B2c

* * *

- 1.04 Disorders of the spine (e.g., herniated nucleus pulposus, spinal arachnoiditis, spinal stenosis, osteoarthritis, degenerative disc disease, facet arthritis, and vertebral fracture), resulting in compromise of a nerve root (including the cauda equine) or spinal cord. With:

- A. Evidence of nerve root compression characterized by neuro-anatomic distribution of pain, limitation of motion of the spine, motor loss (atrophy with associated muscle weakness or muscle weakness) accompanied by sensory or reflex loss and, if there is involvement of the lower back, positive straight-leg raising test (sitting and supine); or
- B. Spinal arachnoiditis, confirmed by an operative note or pathology report of tissue biopsy, or by appropriate medically acceptable imaging, manifested by severe burning or painful dysesthesia, resulting in the need for changes in position or posture more than once every 2 hours; or
- C. Lumbar spinal stenosis resulting in pseudoclaudication, established by findings on appropriate medically acceptable imaging, manifested by chronic nonradicular pain and weakness, and resulting in inability to ambulate effectively, as defined in 1.00B2b. (see above definition)

In order to meet a musculoskeletal listing, the impairment must present a major dysfunction resulting in the inability to ambulate effectively. The Claimant's back and hip pain is supported by medical documentation, as well as her slow and short pace without the use of her cane. These records document cervical and lumbar radiculitis, generalized weakness with restricted range of motion with pain, osteoarthritis of the cervical and lumbar spine and both ankle joints, as well as disc herniation with cord compression. Ultimately, it is found that the Claimant's musculoskeletal impairments meet a listed impairment within 1.00, or are the equivalent thereof, thus the Claimant is found disabled at Step 3.

Assuming *arguendo*, that the Claimant was found to not meet a Listed impairment. The fourth step in analyzing a disability claim requires an assessment of the Claimant's residual functional capacity ("RFC") and past relevant employment. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(4)(iv) An individual is not disabled if he/she can perform past relevant work. *Id.*; 20 CFR 416.960(b)(3) Past relevant work is work that has been performed within the past 15 years that was a

substantial gainful activity and that lasted long enough for the individual to learn the position. 20 CFR 416.960(b)(1) Vocational factors of age, education, and work experience, and whether the past relevant employment exists in significant numbers in the national economy is not considered. 20 CFR 416.960(b)(3) RFC is assessed based on impairment(s), and any related symptoms, such as pain, which may cause physical and mental limitations that affect what can be done in a work setting. RFC is the most that can be done, despite the limitations.

To determine the physical demands (exertional requirements) of work in the national economy, jobs are classified as sedentary, light, medium, heavy, and very heavy. 20 CFR 416.967 Sedentary work involves lifting of no more than 10 pounds at a time and occasionally lifting or carrying articles like docket files, ledgers, and small tools. 20 CFR 416.967(a) 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. *Id.* Jobs are sedentary if walking and standing are required occasionally and other sedentary criteria are met. Light work involves lifting no more than 20 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying objects weighing up to 10 pounds. 20 CFR 416.967(b) Even though 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. *Id.* To be considered capable of performing a full or wide range of light work, an individual must have the ability to do substantially all of these activities. *Id.* An individual capable of light work is also capable of sedentary work, unless there are additionally limiting factors such as loss of fine dexterity or inability to sit for long periods of time. *Id.* Medium work involves lifting no more than 50 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 25 pounds. 20 CFR 416.967(c) An individual capable of performing medium work is also capable of light and

sedentary work. *Id.* Heavy work involves lifting no more than 100 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 50 pounds. 20 CFR 416.967(d) An individual capable of heavy work is also capable of medium, light, and sedentary work. *Id.* Finally, very heavy work involves lifting objects weighing more than 100 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying objects weighing 50 pounds or more. 20 CFR 416.967(e) An individual capable of very heavy work is able to perform work under all categories. *Id.*

Limitations or restrictions which affect the ability to meet the demands of jobs other than strength demands (exertional requirements, i.e. sitting, standing, walking, lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling) are considered nonexertional. 20 CFR 416.969a(a) In considering whether an individual can perform past relevant work, a comparison of the individual's residual functional capacity with the demands of past relevant work. *Id.* If an individual can no longer do past relevant work the same residual functional capacity assessment along with an individual's age, education, and work experience is considered to determine whether an individual can adjust to other work which exists in the national economy. *Id.* Examples of non-exertional limitations or restrictions include difficulty function due to nervousness, anxiousness, or depression; difficulty maintaining attention or concentration; difficulty understanding or remembering detailed instructions; difficulty in seeing or hearing; difficulty tolerating some physical feature(s) of certain work settings (i.e. can't tolerate dust or fumes); or difficulty performing the manipulative or postural functions of some work such as reaching, handling, stooping, climbing, crawling, or crouching. 20 CFR 416.969a(c)(1)(i) – (vi) If the impairment(s) and related symptoms, such as pain, only affect the ability to perform the non-exertional aspects of work-related activities, the rules in Appendix 2 do not direct factual conclusions of disabled or not disabled. 20 CFR 416.969a(c)(2) The determination of whether

disability exists is based upon the principles in the appropriate sections of the regulations, giving consideration to the rules for specific case situations in Appendix 2. *Id.*

The Claimant's limited prior work history includes employment as a general laborer who was responsible for lifting/carrying up to 50 pounds, walking, bending, squatting, etc. In light of the Claimant's testimony and in consideration of the Occupational Code, the Claimant's prior work is classified as unskilled, medium/heavy work.

The Claimant testified that she experiences difficulty lifting/carrying minimal weight; can stand for 10 minutes; can walk short distances with assistance; and is unable to fully squat and/or bend due to pain. The medical documentation notes similar restrictions to include mental limitations relating to her ability to perform activities of daily living; maintain social functioning; concentrate; maintain attention; and interact appropriately in a work setting. If the impairment or combination of impairments does not limit physical or mental ability to do basic work activities, it is not a severe impairment(s) and disability does not exist. 20 CFR 416.920 In consideration of the Claimant's testimony, medical records, and current limitations, it is found that the Claimant is not able to return to past relevant work providing general labor, thus the fifth step in the sequential evaluation would be required.

In Step 5, an assessment of the individual's residual functional capacity and age, education, and work experience is considered to determine whether an adjustment to other work can be made. 20 CFR 416.920(4)(v) At the time of hearing, the Claimant, a high school graduate with some college, was 50 years old thus considered to be closely approaching advanced age for MA-P purposes. Disability is found disabled if an individual is unable to adjust to other work. *Id.* At this point in the analysis, the burden shifts from the Claimant to the Department to present proof that the Claimant has the residual capacity to substantial gainful

employment. 20 CFR 416.960(2); *Richardson v Sec of Health and Human Services*, 735 F2d 962, 964 (CA 6, 1984). While a vocational expert is not required, a finding supported by substantial evidence that the individual has the vocational qualifications to perform specific jobs is needed to meet the burden. *O'Banner v Sec of Health and Human Services*, 587 F2d 321, 323 (CA 6, 1978). Medical-Vocational guidelines found at 20 CFR Subpart P, Appendix II, may be used to satisfy the burden of proving that the individual can perform specific jobs in the national economy. *Heckler v Campbell*, 461 US 458, 467 (1983); *Kirk v Secretary*, 667 F2d 524, 529 (CA 6, 1981) *cert den* 461 US 957 (1983).

In the record presented, the total impact caused by the combination of medical problems suffered by the Claimant would be considered. In doing so, it is found that the combination of the Claimant's physical and mental impairments have a major effect on her ability to perform basic work activities. The Claimant is likely unable to perform the full range of activities for even sedentary work as defined in 20 CFR 416.967(a) due to the nature of the combined limitations. The Claimant's treating physicians have all opined that the Claimant is unable to work. The opinion of the Claimant's treating providers is given great deference. *Rogers v Comm'r of Social Security*, 486 F3d 234, 262 (CA 6 2007). After review of the entire record and in consideration of the Medical-Vocational Guidelines [20 CFR 404, Subpart P, Appendix II], specifically Rule 201.12, had the Claimant not been found to meet a Listing thus disabled at Step 3, the Claimant would be held disabled at Step 5.

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 the Medical Assistance (“MA-P”) program, 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 the 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 November 26, 2008 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 she 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 August 2010 in accordance with department policy.

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

Date Signed: 08/11/09

Date Mailed: 08/12/09

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.

CMM/jlg

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