

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

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No: 200914941

Issue No: 2009/4031

Hearing Date:

June 9, 2009

Saginaw 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 June 9, 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, 45-year-old high school graduate who was admitted to the hospital on April 7, 2008.
2. Claimant was diagnosed by CT scan with cancer in the head of his pancreas, which necessitated a pancreaticoduodenectomy that month.
3. Before claimant's April 2008 surgery he was hospitalized in February and March 2008 with pancreatic symptoms including persistent loss of appetite, stomach pain, vomiting and nausea (Department Exhibit #1, pg 120-240).

4. During claimant's March 2008 hospitalization the doctors noted ongoing alcohol abuse; however, claimant stated he has not used alcohol since his cancer surgery.
5. Claimant has a prison record (out date: 2006), with subsequent county jail time served in May 2009; additionally, he has never been gainfully employed, per self report.
6. On November 21, 2008, claimant applied for disability-based MA/SDA.
7. When the department denied that application claimant filed a hearing request.
8. Claimant's hearing was held on June 9, 2009, approximately two weeks after his most recent jail out date (See Finding of Fact #5 above).
9. Claimant acknowledged at the hearing neither radiation nor chemotherapy was prescribed subsequent to his cancer removal surgery, and in fact, he said he had not been back for a follow-up medical assessment since then.
10. Likewise, claimant was not participating in any mental health treatment or counseling as of his hearing date, but his record reflects a March 2008 diagnosis of depression, for which he continues to take an anti-anxiety agent initiated at diagnosis (██████████) (Department Exhibit #3, pg 2).
11. Claimant's February 2009 ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ initial screening notes his depressive symptoms are not severe enough to warrant in-patient hospitalization, and thus, out-patient counseling was recommended (Department Exhibit #3, pgs 1-5) (See Finding of Fact #10 above).
12. Claimant alleges periodic shortness-of-breath not uncommon in long-term smokers; however, his April 2008 chest x-ray was negative for acute pulmonary process and medications have been prescribed (as needed) for symptom management (██████████) (Department Exhibit #3, pg 6).
13. Lastly, claimant's outdated lumbar spine x-rays (5/02) confirm some arthritis at L5-S1, and claimant reported his doctor has prescribed standard pain medication and a muscle relaxant for symptom management ██████████.

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).

...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).

Additionally, Social Security Ruling 96-4p (SSR 96-4p) states in relevant part:

A “symptom” is not a “medically determinable physical or mental impairment” and no symptom by itself can establish the existence of such an impairment. In the absence of a showing that there is a “medically determinable physical or mental impairment,” an individual must be found not disabled at Step 2 of the sequential evaluation process. No symptom or combination of symptoms can be the basis for a finding of disability, no matter how genuine the individual’s complaints may appear to be, unless there are medical signs and laboratory findings demonstrating the existence of a medically determinable physical or mental impairment.

In addition, 20 CFR 404.1529 and 416.929 provide that an individual’s symptoms, such as pain, fatigue, shortness of breath, weakness, or nervousness will

not be found to affect the individual's ability to do basic work activities...unless medical signs and laboratory findings show that there is a medically determinable physical or mental impairment(s) that could reasonably be expected to produce the symptom(s) alleged.

...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).

...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).

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).

A statement by a medical source finding that an individual is "disabled" or "unable to work" does not mean that disability exists for the purposes of the program. 20 CFR 416.927(e).

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 presented any objective medical evidence to establish a physical or mental condition severe enough to preclude employability. Put simply, claimant's medical records fail to support the constant, pervasive, debilitating pain symptoms he reports. Likewise, no mental impairments have been shown. Consequently, this Administrative Law Judge concludes claimant is fully capable of working in a wide variety of simple, unskilled jobs currently existing in the national economy, which is the standard to be applied in disability determination cases. As such, claimant's November 21, 2008 MA/SDA application must remain denied in concurrence with the department's State Hearing Review Team (SHRT) decision dated July 20, 2009.

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: September 28, 2010

Date Mailed: September 29, 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 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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