

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: 2010-32683
Issue No: 2009
Case No: [REDACTED]
Load No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date:
May 26, 2010
Tuscola 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, a telephone hearing was held on May 26, 2010. Claimant was represented at hearing 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) January 26, 2010, claimant applied for MA and retroactive MA.
- (2) April 8, 2010, the Medical Review Team (MRT) denied claimant's application.

Department Exhibit A.

- (3) April 12, 2010, the department sent claimant written notice that the application was denied.

(4) April 23, 2010, the department received claimant's timely request for hearing.

(5) May 7, 2010, the State Hearing Review Team (SHRT) denied claimant's application. Department Exhibit B.

(6) May 26, 2010, the telephone hearing was held.

(7) Claimant's asserts disability based on impairments caused by bipolar disorder, bad back, bladder problems, and hypertension.

(8) Claimant testified at hearing. Claimant is 45 years old, 5'2" tall, and weighs 230 pounds. Claimant completed high school and is able to read, write, and perform basic math. 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 bakery assistant.

(10) March 30, 2010, claimant's family physician completed a Medical Examination Report (DHS-49) following physical examination that took place on March 30, 2010. Doctor indicates diagnoses of bipolar disorder; hypertension; carpal tunnel; and weak bladder. Doctor indicates that claimant's blood pressure was 120/80. Doctor indicates a normal physical exam with the exception of degenerative disc disease and bipolar disorder. Doctor opines that claimant's condition is stable and she is able to occasionally lift 25 pounds; stand and/or walk at least two hours in an eight-hour day; and sit about six hours in an eight-hour day. Claimant is able to perform a full range of repetitive actions with both upper and both lower extremities. Department Exhibit A, pgs 9-11.

(11) January 15, 2010, claimant underwent a psychiatric evaluation and a narrative report was prepared that indicates AXIS I diagnoses of bipolar disorder, mixed type; anxiety disorder; cannabis dependence; and history of polysubstance dependence. GAF was assessed at 50. Mental health examiner notes that claimant did not show any psychomotor agitation or

retardation; she was fairly engaged and had good eye contact; patient described mood as “roller coaster” and affect was appropriate; she did not show any circumstantiality or tangibility; there were no psychotic symptoms and she denied suicidal or homicidal ideations. Attention and concentration appear fair. Insight and judgment was limited. Fund of knowledge and cognitive abilities appear average. Mental health professional notes that claimant has a longstanding and significant history of substance abuse. She reported a history of two suicide attempts; one by overdose and one by cutting wrists. Department Exhibit A, pgs 22-24. March 23, 2010, mental health professional completed a Mental Residual Functional Capacity Assessment based on the January 15, 2010 psychiatric assessment. Examiner indicated claimant was not significantly limited in 2 of 20 areas of functioning; moderately limited in 7 of 20 areas of functioning and markedly limited in 6 of 20 areas of functioning. There was no evidence of limitation in 5 of 20 areas of functioning. Department Exhibit A, pgs 17-18.

(12) May 26, 2004, claimant underwent x-rays of the cervical spine that revealed no significant abnormalities of the cervical spine. Department Exhibit A, pg 53. May 28, 2004, claimant underwent electromyogram testing and a report was prepared that indicates the following impression: there is electrodiagnostic evidence of bilateral sensory motor carpal tunnel syndrome involving both hand, worse in right hand, without obvious axonal degeneration or chronic denervation or reinnervation; there is no electrodiagnostic evidence of cervical radiculopathy or brachial plexopathy involving the upper extremities. Department Exhibit A, pgs 54-55.

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, the objective medical evidence of record indicates that claimant has hypertension, carpal tunnel syndrome, and weak bladder. At hearing, claimant asserted disability due to an old fracture of the C2 vertebrae. The record contains no objective medical evidence to establish such a condition. Objective medical testing conducted in 2004 revealed claimant to have some evidence of bilateral sensory motor carpal tunnel syndrome involving both hands with no evidence of cervical radiculopathy, brachial plexopathy, obvious axonal degeneration, or chronic denervation or reinnervation. The objective medical evidence of record indicates that claimant has bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, cannabis dependence, and history of polysubstance dependence. At exam, claimant's functioning was generally within normal limits with the exception of insight and judgment. Claimant is noted to have a longstanding and significant history of substance abuse. Claimant's GAF at the time of initial exam was assessed at 50, indicative of serious to moderate symptoms or difficulties. Finding of Fact 10-12; DSM IV, 1994 R.

Public Law 104-121 provides that no finding of disability shall be made where drug and/or alcohol abuse is a material positive factor in the asserted disability. Claimant's mental health treatment professional notes that claimant has a long and significant history of polysubstance abuse and at the time of exam was currently abusing cannabis. Accordingly, no finding of disability shall be made.

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.

At Step 4, claimant's past relevant employment has been as a bakery assistant. She last worked in November 2009. As such, diagnoses of bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome that occurred in 2004, did not prevent claimant from working. She notes that she stopped working in November 2009 due to being laid off. See discussion at Step 2 above. Public Law 104-121 as cited above. Finding of Fact 9-12.

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. Public Law 104-121. Finding of Fact 10-12.

At Step 5, the objective medical evidence of record is sufficient to establish that claimant retains the residual functional capacity to perform at least unskilled light work. Considering claimant's Vocational Profile (younger individual, high school graduate, and history of unskilled work) and relying on Vocational Rule 202.20, claimant is not disabled. Therefore, claimant is disqualified from receiving disability at Step 5.

Claimant does not meet the federal statutory requirements to qualify for disability. Therefore, claimant does not qualify for Medical Assistance based on disability and the department properly denied claimant's application.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that claimant has not established disability for Medical Assistance.

Accordingly, the department's action is hereby, UPHeld.

/s/

Jana A. Bachman
Administrative Law Judge
for Ismael Ahmed, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: July 27, 2010

Date Mailed: July 28, 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.

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JAB/db

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