

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No: 201032841
Issue No: 2009, 4031
Case No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: May 26, 2011
Montmorency County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Landis Y. Lain for Ivona Rairigh

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, 2011. Claimant personally appeared and testified.

This hearing was originally held by Administrative Law Judge Ivona Rairigh. Ivona Rairigh is no longer affiliated with the Michigan Administrative Hearing System Administrative Hearings for the Department of Human Services and this hearing decision was completed by Administrative Law Judge Landis Y. Lain by considering the entire record.

ISSUE

Did the Department of Human Services (the department) properly deny claimant's application for Medical Assistance (MA-P) and State Disability Assistance (SDA)?

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

- (1) On March 10, 2010, claimant filed an application for Medical Assistance and State Disability Assistance benefits alleging disability.
- (2) On April 5, 2010, the Medical Review Team denied claimant's application stating that claimant is capable of performing other work pursuant to Medical Vocational Rule 202.17.

- (3) On April 16, 2010, the department case worker sent claimant notice that her application was denied.
- (4) On April 26, 2010, claimant filed a request for a hearing to contest the department's negative action.
- (5) On May 7, 2010, the State Hearing Review Team again denied claimant's application stating in its' analysis and recommendation: despite the discrepancies between two psychiatric evaluations, it is noted that the claimant is receiving pharmacotherapy secondary to psychiatric symptoms and per page 242 is doing much better since they have restarted medications. There are no physical limitations other than it would be prudent for the claimant to avoid pulmonary irritants. The claimant's impairment's do not meet/equal the intent or severity of a Social Security listing. The medical evidence of record indicates that the claimant retains the capacity to perform a wide range of exertional work of a simple and repetitive nature. It would further be prudent to avoid concentrated exposure to pulmonary irritants. Therefore, based on the claimant's vocational profile of 43 years old, a less than high school education and a history of light unskilled and medium semi-skilled employment, MA-P is denied using Vocational Rule 204.00 as a guide. Retroactive MA-P was considered in this case and is also denied. SDA was not applied for by the claimant. Listings 1.04, 3.02, 3.03, 12.04, 12.06, 12.08, and 12.09 were considered in this determination.
- (6) The hearing was held on May 26, 2010. At the hearing, claimant waived the time periods and requested to submit additional medical information.
- (7) Additional medical information was submitted and sent to the State Hearing Review Team on June 15, 2010.
- (8) On June 18, 2010, the State Hearing Review Team again denied claimant's application stating that in its' analysis and recommendation: this case was returned by the Office of Administrative Hearings with new evidence for review. The new evidence does not materially alter the findings of a May 7, 2010, State Hearing Review Team determination. The claimant's impairment's do not meet/equal the intent or severity of a Social Security listing. The medical evidence of record indicates that the claimant retains the capacity to perform a wide range of simple and repetitive work while also avoiding concentrated exposure to pulmonary irritants. Therefore, based on the claimant's vocational profile of 43 years old, a less than high school education and a history of light unskilled and medium semi-skilled employment, MA-P is denied using Vocational Rule 204.00 as a guide. Retroactive MA-P was considered in this case and is also denied. SDA is denied per PEM 261 because the nature and severity of the claimant's impairment's would not preclude work activity at the

above stated level for 90 days. Listings 1.04, 3.02, 3.03, 12.04, 12.06, 12.08, and 12.09 were considered in this determination.

- (9) On the date of hearing claimant was a 43-year-old woman whose birth date is Marc [REDACTED]. Claimant is 5'2" tall and weighs 163 pounds. Claimant attended the 9th grade. Claimant is able to read and write and does have basic math skills and can count with fingers.
- (10) Claimant alleges the last time she worked is in 2006 in housekeeping.
- (11) Claimant alleges as disabling impairments: pulmonary disease, back pain, anxiety, and a panic disorder.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The regulations governing the hearing and appeal process for applicants and recipients of public assistance in Michigan are found in the Michigan Administrative Code, MAC R 400.901-400.951. An opportunity for a hearing shall be granted to an applicant who requests a hearing because his or her claim for assistance has been denied. MAC R 400.903(1). Clients have the right to contest a department decision affecting eligibility or benefit levels whenever it is believed that the decision is incorrect. The department will provide an administrative hearing to review the decision and determine the appropriateness of that decision. BAM 600.

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).

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 Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 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).

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).

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).

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 claimant'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 has not worked since 2006. Claimant is not disqualified from receiving disability at Step 1.

The objective medical evidence on the record indicates that a medical examination report dated [REDACTED] indicates that claimant was 63" tall and weighed 163 pounds. Her body mass index was 28.98 and her body surface area 1.77. Temperature was 98.8 degrees Fahrenheit. Her pulse was 80 and regular. Respiration was 12, and blood pressure 110/70. Claimant was feeling down, depressed or hopeless and she had little interest or pleasure in doing things (p. 345).

She was generally well nourished, well hydrated and in no acute distress. All areas of examination were normal (p. 343).

A mental status evaluation indicates that her judgment and insight was intact. She was oriented to time, person and place. Memory was intact for recent and remote events and she had no depression, anxiety or agitation (p. 342).

A psychiatric report dated October 13, 2006, indicates that claimant had depression, post traumatic stress disorder, agoraphobia, hostage syndrome, and an axis GAF of 40 (p. 300).

A medical examination report in the file dated [REDACTED] indicates that claimant was 62.5" tall and weighed 144 pounds. Her blood pressure was 118/80 and she was right hand dominant. She was normal in all areas of examination. The clinical impression is that she was stable and she had a temporary disability. She could frequently carry less than 10 pounds and never carry 10 pounds or more. She could stand or walk at least 2 hours in an 8 hour work day and sit less than 6 hours in an 8 work day. She could use both upper extremities for simple grasping and only the right

for simple reaching, pushing, pulling and fine manipulating. She could operate foot and leg controls with both feet and legs (p. 293).

A [REDACTED] medical examination report indicates that the claimant is cooperative in answering questions and following commands. She is dressed in a T-shirt, jeans and tennis shoes. The claimant's immediate, remote and recent is intact with normal concentration. The claimant's insight and judgment are both appropriate. The claimant provides a good effort during the examination. Blood pressure on the left arm was 116/74. Pulse is 74 and regular. Respiratory rate is 14. Weight is 171 and height is 63.5" without shoes. The skin was normal. Eyes and ears: visual acuity in the right eye is 20/20, left eye is 20/20 without corrective lenses. Pupils are equal, round and reactive to light the claimant could hear conversational speech without limitations. The neck was supple without masses. In the chest, breath sounds are clear to auscultation and symmetrical. There is no accessory muscle use. In the heart: there is regular rate and rhythm without enlargement. There is a normal S1 and S2. In the abdomen, there is no organomegaly or masses. Bowel sounds are normal. In the vascular area there is no clubbing or cyanosis appreciated. There is no edema present. The peripheral pulses are intact. In the musculoskeletal area, there is no evidence of joint laxity, crepitation or effusion. Grip strength remains intact. Dexterity is unimpaired. The claimant could pick up a coin, button clothing and open a door. The claimant had no difficulty getting on and off the examination table, no difficulty heel and toe walking, no difficulty squatting and no difficulty hopping. There is lumbar spine straightening with paravertebral spasms. Range of motion studies were normal (p. 233).

In the neurological area, cranial nerves are intact. Motor strength and tone are normal. Sensory is intact to light touch and pinprick. Reflexes are 2+ and symmetrical. Romberg testing is negative. The claimant walks with a normal gait without the use of an assist device. The conclusion is shoulder and back pain, much of this appears to be due to repetitive activity. She did undergo arthroscopic intervention to her shoulder and the range of motion was well preserved. She did not have any difficulty with orthopedic maneuvers. Her gait was normal. Her lung fields were clear, she was not on inhaler therapy and there was no findings of acute deterioration (p. 228).

At Step 2, claimant has the burden of proof of establishing that she has a severely restrictive physical or mental impairment that has lasted or is expected to last for the duration of at least 12 months. There is insufficient objective clinical medical evidence in the record that claimant suffers a severely restrictive physical or mental impairment. Claimant has reports of pain in multiple areas of her body; however, there are no corresponding clinical findings that support the reports of symptoms and limitations made by the claimant. There are no laboratory or x-ray findings listed in the file which support claimant's contention of disability. The clinical impression is that claimant is stable. There is no medical finding that claimant has any muscle atrophy or trauma, abnormality or injury that is consistent with a deteriorating condition. In short, claimant has restricted herself from tasks associated with occupational functioning based upon her reports of pain (symptoms) rather than medical findings. Reported symptoms are an insufficient basis upon which a finding that claimant has met the evidentiary burden of

proof can be made. This Administrative Law Judge finds that the medical record is insufficient to establish that claimant has a severely restrictive physical impairment.

Claimant alleges the following disabling mental impairments: depression, anxiety, and agoraphobia.

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).

There is insufficient objective medical/psychiatric evidence in the record indicating claimant suffers severe mental limitations. There is no mental residual functional capacity assessment in the record. There is insufficient evidence contained in the file of depression or a cognitive dysfunction that is so severe that it would prevent claimant from working at any job. Claimant was oriented to time, person and place during the hearing. Claimant was able to answer all of the questions at the hearing and was responsive to the questions. The evidentiary record is insufficient to find that claimant suffers a severely restrictive mental impairment. For these reasons, this Administrative Law Judge finds that claimant has failed to meet her burden of proof at Step 2. Claimant must be denied benefits at this step based upon her failure to meet the evidentiary burden.

If claimant had not been denied at Step 2, the analysis would proceed to Step 3 where the medical evidence of claimant's condition does not give rise to a finding that she would meet a statutory listing in the code of federal regulations.

If claimant had not already been denied at Step 2, this Administrative Law Judge would have to deny her again at Step 4 based upon her ability to perform her past relevant work. There is no evidence upon which this Administrative Law Judge could base a finding that claimant is unable to perform work in which she has engaged in, in the past. Therefore, if claimant had not already been denied at Step 2, she would be denied again at Step 4.

The Administrative Law Judge will continue to proceed through the sequential evaluation process to determine whether or not claimant has the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in her prior jobs.

At Step 5, the burden of proof shifts to the department to establish that claimant does not have residual functional capacity.

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).

Claimant has submitted insufficient objective medical evidence that she lacks the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in her prior employment or that she is physically unable to do light or sedentary tasks if demanded of her. Claimant's activities of daily living do not appear to be very limited and she should be able to perform light or sedentary work even with her impairments. Claimant has failed to provide the necessary objective medical evidence to establish that she has a severe impairment or combination of impairments which prevent her from performing any level of work for a period of 12 months. The claimant's testimony as to her limitations indicates that she should be able to perform light or sedentary work.

There is insufficient objective medical/psychiatric evidence contained in the file of depression or a cognitive dysfunction that is so severe that it would prevent claimant from working at any job. Claimant was able to answer all the questions at the hearing and was responsive to the questions. Claimant was oriented to time, person and place during the hearing. Claimant's complaints of pain, while profound and credible, are out of proportion to the objective medical evidence contained in the file as it relates to claimant's ability to perform work. Therefore, this Administrative Law Judge finds that the objective medical evidence on the record does not establish that claimant has no residual functional capacity. Claimant is disqualified from receiving disability at Step 5 based upon the fact that she has not established by objective medical evidence that she cannot perform light or sedentary work even with her impairments. Under the Medical-Vocational guidelines, a younger individual (age 43), with a less than high school education and an unskilled work history who is limited to light work is not considered disabled.

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 mailing 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.

LYL/alc

cc:

