

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

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No: 201032928
Issue No: 2009/4031
Load No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date:
May 26, 2010
Genesee County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Marya A. Nelson-Davis

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. The record was held open to allow Claimant the opportunity to submit additional medical documentation.

ISSUE

Did the department properly determine that Claimant did not meet the disability standard for Medical Assistance based on disability (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 December 15, 2009, Claimant applied for SDA benefits.
2. On March 25, 2010, the Medical Review Team (MRT) denied Claimant's request for SDA benefits. (Department Exhibit 1, pp. 9 & 10)
3. On April 2, 2010, the department notified Claimant that he was denied SDA benefits.
4. On April 19, 2010, the Department received Claimant's hearing request, protesting the denial of SDA benefits.
5. On October 15, 2010, Claimant applied for MA-P and SDA benefits.

6. On November 16, 2011, MRT denied Claimant's request for MA-P, retro MA-P, and SDA benefits.
7. The State Hearing Review Team (SHRT) upheld the denial of MA-P and SDA benefits.
8. Claimant applied for disability benefits based on having back problems, depression, and blindness in the one eye.
9. Claimant was diagnosed with degenerative spine disease.
10. On March 16, 2010, Claimant underwent an eye examination which revealed left eye blindness, and he needed glasses to see out of his right eye.
11. On May 13, 2010, Claimant underwent an orthopedic examination which revealed the following: Claimant was 5'10" 205 lbs; Claimant walked without the use of a handheld device and could tandem heel toe walk and had normal gait; Claimant was able to squat fully and arise under his own power; Claimant's straight leg raising was fully negative at 90 degrees bilaterally at both knees and ankles; Claimant had active range of motion in the lumbar spine; Claimant reported blindness in the left eye, but the examiner reported he would have concluded that Claimant had grossly normal hearing, vision, and phonation, and he showed good facility with each hand independently by picking up small objects; and Claimant's Jamar dynamometer grip strengths did reflect a decrease in grip strength of the right hand at 45 pounds per square inch compared to his non-dominant hand on the left at 78 pounds per square inch.
12. Claimant is a 44 year-old male with a GED and unskilled work experience.
13. Claimant was not engaged in substantial gainful activity at any time relevant to this matter.

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).

Current legislative amendments to the Act delineate eligibility criteria as implemented by agency policy set forth in program manuals.

2000 PA 294, Sec. 604, of the statute states:

Sec. 604 (1) The department shall operate a state disability assistance program. Except as provided in subsection (3), persons eligible for this program shall include needy citizens of the United States or aliens exempt from the Supplemental Security Income citizenship requirement who are at least 18 years of age or emancipated minors meeting one or more of the following requirements:

- (b) A person with a physical or mental impairment which meets federal SSI disability standards, except that the minimum duration of the disability shall be 90 days. Substance abuse alone is not defined as a basis for eligibility.

“Disability” is:

...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

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).

...You can only be found disabled if you are unable 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. See 20 CFR 416.905. Your impairment must result from anatomical, physiological, or psychological abnormalities which are demonstrable by medically acceptable clinical and laboratory diagnostic techniques.... 20 CFR 416.927(a)(1).

...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).

...The medical evidence...must be complete and detailed enough to allow us to make a determination about whether you are disabled or blind. 20 CFR 416.913(d).

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).

...Evidence that you submit or that we obtain 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 your impairment(s), including your symptoms, diagnosis and prognosis, what you can still do despite impairment(s), and your physical or mental restrictions. 20 CFR 416.927(a)(2).

[As Judge]...We are responsible for making the determination or decision about whether you meet the statutory definition of disability. In so doing, we review all of the medical findings and other evidence that support a

medical source's statement that you are disabled.... 20 CFR 416.927(e).

...A statement by a medical source that you are "disabled" or "unable to work" does not mean that we will determine that you are disabled. 20 CFR 416.927(e).

Claimant applied for MA-P and SDA benefits based on having back problems, depression, and blindness in the one eye. Claimant provided no objective medical evidence to establish that he is mentally incapable of doing basic work activities. However, Claimant provided the necessary objective medical evidence to establish that he has a combination of physical problems that would significantly affect his ability to work and meet the MA-P and SDA duration standard. Therefore, the analysis continues.

Claimant failed to establish that he has a severe impairment which meets or equals a listed impairment found at 20 CFR, Part 404, Subpart P, Appendix 1. Therefore, the analysis continues.

Claimant testified that he has past relevant working in a group home, and his past relevant work involved heavy lifting. Claimant was diagnosed with degenerative spine disease. The analysis will continue to determine Claimant's residual functional capacity or what he is able to do despite limitations. 20 CFR 416.945 and 20 CFR 416.961.

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).

This Administrative Law Judge finds that Claimant should be able to do at least light work. On May 13, 2010, Claimant underwent an orthopedic examination which revealed the following: Claimant walked without the use of a handheld device and could tandem heel toe walk and had normal gait; Claimant was able to squat fully and arise under his own power; Claimant's straight leg raising was fully negative at 90 degrees bilaterally at both knees and ankles; Claimant had active range of motion in the lumbar spine; Claimant reported blindness in the left eye, but the examiner reported he would have concluded that Claimant had grossly normal hearing, vision, and phonation, and he showed good facility with each hand independently by picking up small objects; and Claimant's Jamar dynamometer grip strengths did reflect a decrease in grip strength of the right hand at 45 pounds per square inch compared to his non-dominant hand on the left at 78 pounds per square inch. Claimant testified that he has been blind in his left eye since birth. However, he has been able to work despite his left eye blindness, and he is able to see out of his right eye with glasses.

Medical vocational guidelines have been developed and can be found in 20 CFR, Subpart P, Appendix 2, Section 200.00. When the facts coincide with a particular guideline, the guideline directs a conclusion as to disability. 20 CFR 416.969.

Claimant is considered a younger individual with a limited educational background and unskilled work experience. 20 CFR 416.963, 20 CFR 416.964, and 20 CFR 416.968. Using Medical Vocational Rule 202.20 as a guideline, claimant would be considered not disabled. According to this Medical Vocational Rule, a young individual under the age of 50, with a high school education and unskilled work experience, limited to light work, is not disabled.

In conclusion, Claimant does not meet the standard for disability as set forth in the Social Security regulations. Accordingly, the department's MA-P and SDA decision is upheld.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides the department properly determined that Claimant did not meet the MA-P and SDA disability standard.

Accordingly, the department's MA-P and SDA decision is affirmed.

/s/

Marya Nelson-Davis
Administrative Law Judge Manager
Michigan Administrative Hearing System
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: August 18, 2011

Date Mailed: August 18, 2011

MAND/db

cc:

