

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

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No: 201052639
Issue No: 2009
Case No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: November 9, 2010
Washtenaw County DHS #20

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Landis Y. Lain

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, an in person hearing was held on November 9, 2010. Claimant was represented at the hearing by Independent Medical Network.

ISSUE

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

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 19, 2009, claimant filed an application for Medical Assistance and retroactive Medical Assistance benefits alleging disability.
- (2) On May 6, 2009, the State Hearing Review Team denied claimant's application stating that claimant could perform other work pursuant to Medical Vocational Rule 202.13.
- (3) On May 13, 2009, the department caseworker sent claimant notice that his application was denied.
- (4) On May 29, 2009, claimant filed a request for a hearing to contest the department's negative action.

- (5) On September 23, 2010, the State Hearing Review Team again denied claimant's application stating that claimant had insufficient evidence and requesting an independent physical examination by an internist.
- (6) The hearing was held on November 9, 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 17, 2011.
- (8) On August 22, 2011, the State Hearing Review Team again denied claimant's application stating in its analysis and recommended decision: The objective medical evidence present does not establish a disability at the listing or equivalence level. The collective medical evidence shows that the claimant is capable of light work. The claimant's impairment does not meet/equal the intent or severity of an appropriate Social Security listing. The medical evidence of record indicates that the claimant retains the capacity to perform light work. Therefore, based on the claimant's vocational profile of closely approaching advance age, 12th grade education, and light work history, MA-P is denied using Vocational Rule 202.13 as a guide. Retroactive MA-P was considered in this case and is also denied.
- (9) On the date of hearing claimant was a 53-year-old man whose date of birth was [REDACTED]. Claimant was 5'8" tall and weighs 235 pounds. Claimant is a high school graduate and is able to read and write and does have basic math skills.
- (10) Claimant last worked in 2008 as a handyman and did window painting. Claimant also worked as an assistant manager at a laundry mat, for the sanitation department and [REDACTED].
- (11) Claimant alleges as disabling impairments: Aortic valve replacement and an aortic stenosis.

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 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 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 has not worked since 2008. Claimant is not disqualified from receiving disability at Step 1.

The objective medical evidence on the record indicates that claimant has signed the record that he lives alone in a house and has sisters support. Claimant is single with no children under 18 who lives with him and has no income or benefits from the Department of Human Services. Claimant does have a driver's license and does cook food 3 time a week including things like raw vegetables, baked or grilled meat and cereal. Claimant stated that he does dust, do dishes and laundry and he watches television 5-6 hours per day. He usually reads the bible and goes to church 3-4 nights from 7-9 p.m. and all day Sunday.

Claimant testified that he can stand for 40 minutes, sit for an hour and half two hours at a time and can walk a half mile. Claimant has stated he can not squat but he can bend at the waist and that he can shower and dress himself. Claimant has stated he can not tie his left shoe and that he can not touch his toes. Claimant has signed the record that his level of pain on a scale from 1-10 without medication is 8-9 and with medication is a 5-6. Claimant is ambidextrous and he stated that his hands and arms are fine. Claimant stated his legs and feet are numb with no feelings in the calves. Claimant stated the heaviest weight he can carry is 15-20 pounds and he doesn't smoke, drink alcohol or take any drugs. Claimant testified on a typical day he fast, prays, does crossword puzzles, walks ½ mile, talks on the phone with prayer team and then eats.

The objective medical evidence on the record indicates that claimant has history of aortic stenosis status post aortic root repair on January 23, 2009, as well as a hip replacement (Pg1). In November 2010 his lungs were clear and heart was normal. His blood pressure is slightly elevated. He was slightly limited in range of motion of the lumbar, hips, and knees. However, he was able to get on and off the examination table and squat (Pgs 1-4).

A medical examination report dated July 21, 2010 indicates that peripheral blood pressure was 145/80 left arm sitting, pulse 86, respirations 14, weight is 238.7 pounds. This was unchanged compared to the last visit. The neck veins were 6 centimeters at 30 degrees. The carotid strokes are brisk. There are no neck bruits. Lungs are clear. The apex impulse is not discrete. S1 is normal, S2 is single. There is a grade II/VI widely radiating systolic murmur. Abdomen is soft and nontender. There is no organomegaly. The peripheral pulses are symmetric. There is not edema. (Pg 27)

July 15, 2010 a medical examination report indicates that on physical examination claimant's temperature was 36.5 Celsius, blood pressure 113/68, pulse 75, respiratory rate 20, pulse ox symmetry 99% on room air. General: no acute distress. The HEENT was normocephalic, atraumatic. Pupils reactive to light. Oropharynx clear. Moist mucous membranes. The neck was supple with no lymphadenopathy, no JVD. The cardiovascular had regular rate and rhythm. No murmurs, rubs, or gallops. Respiratory: lungs were clear to auscultation bilaterally. No rhonchi, rales, or wheezes. The abdomen was soft, nontender, nondistended, normal bowel sounds, no masses. The chest was tender to palpation over left pectoralis muscle. The extremities had no peripheral edema or clubbing. The skin was warm, dry, with no rashes or lesions. Claimant was alert and oriented x 4, moving all 4 extremities and had no focal

neurological deficits. The EKG showed normal sinus rhythm. No. ST-segment changes. The chest x-ray was unremarkable with no acute pathology. The most likely diagnosis is musculoskeletal chest pain secondary to the patient's weight lifting. (Pg. 25)

At Step 2, claimant has the burden of proof of establishing that he 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 his 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 himself from tasks associated with occupational functioning based upon his 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 no disabling mental impairments.

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 his burden of proof at Step 2. Claimant must be denied benefits at this step based upon his 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 he 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 him again at Step 4 based upon his ability to perform his 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 he has engaged in, in the past. Therefore, if claimant had not already been denied at Step 2, he 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 his 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 he lacks the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in his prior employment or that he is physically unable to do light or sedentary tasks if demanded of him. Claimant's activities of daily living do not appear to be very limited and he should be able to perform light or sedentary work even with his impairments. Claimant has failed to provide the necessary objective medical evidence to establish that he has a severe impairment or combination of impairments which prevent him from performing any level of work for a period of 12 months. The claimant's testimony as to his limitations indicates that he 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 he has not established by objective medical evidence that he cannot perform light or sedentary work even with his impairments. Under the Medical-Vocational guidelines, a person who is closely approaching advanced age at (age 53), with a high school education and a light work history who is limited to light work is not considered disabled pursuant to Medical Vocational Rule 202.13.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the department has appropriately established on the record that it was acting in compliance with department policy when it denied claimant's application for Medical Assistance and retroactive Medical Assistance benefits. The claimant should be able to perform a wide range of light or sedentary work even with his impairments. The department has established its case by a preponderance of the evidence.

Accordingly, the department's decision is **AFFIRMED**.

/s/

Landis Y. Lain
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: August 26, 2011

Date Mailed: August 29, 2011

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 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.

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