

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: 2010-10873

Issue No: 2009; 4031

Case No: [REDACTED]

Load No: [REDACTED]

Hearing Date:

February 24, 2010

Macomb County DHS

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, a telephone hearing was held on February 24, 2010. Claimant personally appeared and testified.

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 September 8, 2008, claimant filed an application for Medical Assistance and State Disability Assistance benefits alleging disability.

(2) On May 5, 2009, claimant filed a second application for Medical Assistance and State Disability Assistance benefits.

(3) On October 5, 2009, the Medical Review Team denied claimant's application stating that claimant can perform other work, according to Medical Vocational Rule 202.21.

(4) On October 15, 2009, the department caseworker sent claimant notice that his applications was denied.

(5) On October 29, 2009, claimant filed a request for a hearing to contest the department's negative action.

(6) On December 29, 2009, the State Hearing Review Team again denied claimant's application stating in its analysis and recommendation: The medical evidence will accurately support the treating source statement found on page 13 versus page 17. Claimant does not have significant limitations associated with physical condition other than recent seizure activity onset. The claimant's impairments do not meet/equal the intent or severity of the Social Security Listings. The medical evidence of record indicates that claimant retains the capacity to perform a wide range of exertional work with limitations of no ropes, ladders, scaffolding and dangerous machine or exposed to unprotected heights. Psychiatric allegations are neither made no discovered. Therefore, based on the claimant's vocational profile of 49-year-old high school education and medium unskilled work history, Medicaid P is denied using Vocational Rule 202.20 as a guide. Retroactive Medicaid P was considered in this case and was also denied. State Disability Assistance is denied per PEM 261 because the nature and severity of the claimant's impairments would not preclude work activity at the above stated level for 90 days. Listings 1.02 and 1.03, 4.04, and 11.02 and 11.03 were considered in this determination. .

(7) The hearing was held on February 24, 2010. At the hearing, claimant waived the time periods and requested to submit additional medical information.

(8) Additional medical information was submitted was three pages of medical bills and no additional clinical medical information.

(9) The record was then closed on April 23, 2010.

(10) Claimant is a 50-year-old man whose birth date is [REDACTED] Claimant is 6' tall and weighs 136 pounds. Claimant is a high school graduate and continues to go to college in auto mechanics. Claimant can read and write some and can add or subtract money..

(10) Claimant last worked approximately in 2006 in [REDACTED] Claimant also worked in moving, painting and drywall.

(11) Claimant alleges as disabling impairments: Ventricular fibrillation, seizures, left shoulder pain, and pacemaker, cardiac arrest in 2008, closed head injury in 2008, left shoulder problems and concentration problems.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

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 Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 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 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 approximately 2006. Claimant is not disqualified from receiving disability at Step 1.

The objective medical evidence on the record indicates that the claimant is alleging disability secondary to ventricular fibrillation, seizures, and left shoulder pain. The claimant had a history of coronary bypass in 2007, in 2008 had a pacemaker placed related to fibrillation. There is a treating source statement that he can only lift less than ten pounds frequently. (Page 13) Another treating source statement that claimant retains the ability to work with seizure restrictions being the only limitations. In March 16, 2009, Medical Examination Report from [REDACTED] indicates that claimant's blood pressure was 122/74. Weight was 130 pounds and his height was 6' tall. He was afebrile. Patient was pleasant, alert and oriented with normal body habitus and no deformities. The claimant was clean and well groomed. No neurocutaneous lesions. In the cardiovascular examination, the examination of the carotid arteries revealed no bruits. Bilateral carotid upstroke is equal. Heart regular for rhythm and rate. No murmurs, clicks or rubs. Normal examination of the peripheral vascular system demonstrates no evidence of swelling or varicosities. Peripheral pulses are palpable. There is no edema or tenderness. In the musculoskeletal examination, the gait and stations were normal. There is a positive Tinel's sign on the left. He has left side shoulder decreased range of motion and abduction inversion and aversion. This is subsequent to his shoulder reconstructive surgery. Patient is alert to time, person and recent and remote memory are intact. Attention span and concentration appear normal. Language function and spontaneous speech are normal without

evidence of altered language function, aphasia or paraphasia. Patient's general fund of knowledge, including past history, awareness of current events is intact. In the cranial nerves, #1 was not tested. No. 2 visual fields were full. Fundoscopic examination is benign. Visual acuity is normal. Pupils are equal and round and reactive. Cranial nerves 3, 4, and 6, there is full range of ocular gaze, no evidence of conjunctival irritation. In 5, facial sensation is intact. Corneal reflexes are equal. Masseter tone, bulk and strength intact. No. 7 no facial asymetrics are noted. No. 8 Weber and Rinne's reflexes are intact. Palate elevates symmetrically. Shoulder is symmetrical with strength. No. 12 time protrudes in the midline without deviation or vasculations. Deep tendon reflexes are 2+ in the biceps, triceps, wrists, knees and ankles without evidence of pathologic reflexes or clonus. The cerebellar examination: finger to nose, finger to finger and heel to shin performed well. Rapid alternating movements performed adequately. Romberg was not present. Tandem gait performed adequately. In the sensory examination, there are no peripheral or cortical sensory loss noted to pinprick, light to touch, temperature, vibration, position, 2 point discrimination, graphesthesia or astereognosis. (Page 16 and 17.) The claimant testified on the record that he can stand for five or ten minutes, sit for half an hour, walk two to three blocks, and can shower and dress himself and tie his shoes while sitting and touch his toes while sitting. Claimant testified that he can carry eight to ten pounds.

The clinical impressions are that claimant is stable and that claimant alleges the following disabling mental impairments: concentration problems, poor writing skills.

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. 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.

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 a 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 her 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 younger individual (age), with a high school education and an unskilled work history who is limited to light work is not considered disabled.

The department's Program Eligibility Manual contains the following policy statements and instructions for caseworkers regarding the State Disability Assistance program: to receive State Disability Assistance, a person must be disabled, caring for a disabled person or age 65 or older. BEM, Item 261, p. 1. Because the claimant does not meet the definition of disabled under the MA-P program and because the evidence of record does not establish that claimant is unable to work for a period exceeding 90 days, the claimant does not meet the disability criteria for State Disability Assistance benefits either.

The Department has established by the necessary competent, material and substantial evidence on the record that it was acting in compliance with department policy when it determined that claimant was not eligible to receive Medical Assistance and/or State Disability Assistance.

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

