

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

**IN THE MATTER OF THE CLAIM OF:**

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 2010-25641  
Issue No.: 2009/4031  
Case No.: [REDACTED]  
Load No.: [REDACTED]  
Hearing Date: July 8, 2010  
Wayne County DHS (43)

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:** Colleen M. Mamelka

**HEARING DECISION**

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and MCL 400.37 upon the Claimant's request for a hearing. After due notice, a telephone hearing was conducted from Detroit, Michigan on Thursday, July 8, 2010. The Claimant appeared and testified. [REDACTED] appeared on behalf of the Department.

**ISSUE**

Whether the Department properly determined that the Claimant was not disabled for purposes of Medical Assistance ("MA-P") and State Disability Assistance ("SDA") benefit programs?

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

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

1. The Claimant submitted an application for public assistance seeking MA-P and SDA benefits on January 20, 2010. (Exhibit 1, pp. 15 – 21)
2. On February 10, 2010, the Medical Review Team ("MRT") determined the Claimant was not disabled finding her capable of performing past relevant work. (Exhibit 1, pp. 6, 7)

3. On February 20, 2010, the Department sent the Claimant an Eligibility Notice informing her that she was found not disabled for purposes of the MA-P and SDA benefit programs. (Exhibit 1, pp. 3, 4)
4. On March 2, 2010, the Department received the Claimant's written request for hearing. (Exhibit 1, p. 2)
5. On March 19, 2010, the State Hearing Review Team ("SHRT") determined that the Claimant was not disabled. (Exhibit 2)
6. The Claimant's alleged physical disabling impairment(s) are due to recurrent tumors.
7. The Claimant has not alleged any mental disabling impairment(s).
8. At the time of hearing, the Claimant was 60 years old with a [REDACTED] birth date; was 4'11" in height; and weighed about 180 pounds.
9. The Claimant is a college graduate with continuing education in criminal justice.
10. The Claimant's past (and current) employment consists of work as a care /chore provider and as a Chaplain.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

The Medical Assistance ("MA") program is established by Subchapter XIX of Chapter 7 of The Public Health & Welfare Act, 42 USC 1397, and is administered by the Department of Human Services ("DHS"), formerly known as the Family Independence Agency, 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 Bridges Reference Manual ("BRM").

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) The person claiming a physical or mental disability has the burden to establish it through the use of competent medical evidence from qualified medical sources such as his or her medical history, clinical/laboratory findings, diagnosis/prescribed treatment, prognosis for recovery and/or medical assessment of ability to do work-related activities or ability to reason and make appropriate mental adjustments, if a mental disability is alleged. 20 CFR 413.913 An individual's subjective pain complaints are not, in and of themselves, sufficient to establish disability. 20 CFR 416.908; 20 CFR 416.929(a) Similarly, conclusory

statements by a physician or mental health professional that an individual is disabled or blind, absent supporting medical evidence, is insufficient to establish disability. 20 CFR 416.927

When determining disability, the federal regulations require several factors to be considered including: (1) the location/duration/frequency/intensity of an applicant's pain; (2) the type/dosage/effectiveness/side effects of any medication the applicants takes to relieve pain; (3) any treatment other than pain medication that the applicant has received to relieve pain; and (4) the effect of the applicant's pain on his or her ability to do basic work activities. 20 CFR 416.929(c)(3) The applicant's pain must be assessed to determine the extent of his or her functional limitation(s) in light of the objective medical evidence presented. 20 CFR 416.929(c)(2)

In order to determine whether or not an individual is disabled, federal regulations require a five-step sequential evaluation process be utilized. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(1) The five-step analysis requires the trier of fact to consider an individual's current work activity; the severity of the impairment(s) both in duration and whether it meets or equals a listed impairment in Appendix 1; residual functional capacity to determine whether an individual can perform past relevant work; and residual functional capacity along with vocational factors (i.e. age, education, and work experience) to determine if an individual can adjust to other work. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(4); 20 CFR 416.945

If an individual is found disabled, or not disabled, at any step, a determination or decision is made with no need evaluate subsequent steps. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(4) If a determination cannot be made that an individual is disabled, or not disabled, at a particular step, the next step is required. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(4) If an impairment does not meet or equal a listed impairment, an individual's residual functional capacity is assessed before moving from step three to step four. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(4); 20 CFR 416.945 Residual functional capacity is the most an individual can do despite the limitations based on all relevant evidence. 20 CFR 945(a)(1) An individual's residual functional capacity assessment is evaluated at both steps four and five. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(4) In determining disability, an individual's functional capacity to perform basic work activities is evaluated and if found that the individual has the ability to perform basic work activities without significant limitation, disability will not be found. 20 CFR 416.994(b)(1)(iv) In general, the individual has the responsibility to prove disability. 20 CFR 416.912(a) An impairment or combination of impairments is not severe if it does not significantly limit an individual's physical or mental ability to do basic work activities. 20 CFR 416.921(a) The individual has the responsibility to provide evidence of prior work experience; efforts to work; and any other factor showing how the impairment affects the ability to work. 20 CFR 416.912(c)(3)(5)(6)

In general, the individual has the responsibility to prove disability. 20 CFR 416.912(a) An impairment or combination of impairments is not severe if it does not significantly limit an individual's physical or mental ability to do basic work activities. 20 CFR 416.921(a) An individual is not disabled regardless of the medical condition, age,

education, and work experience, if the individual is working and the work is a substantial, gainful activity. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(4)(i) Substantial gainful activity means work that involves doing significant and productive physical or mental duties and is done (or intended) for pay or profit. 20 CFR 416.910(a)(b) Substantial gainful activity is work activity that is both substantial and gainful. 20 CFR 416.972 Work may be substantial even if it is done on a part-time basis or if an individual does less, with less responsibility, and gets paid less than prior employment. 20 CFR 416.972(a) Gainful work activity is work activity that is done for pay or profit. 20 CFR 416.972(b) Generally, in evaluating work activity for substantial activity purposes, a primary consideration is the earnings derived from the work activity. 20 CFR 416.974(a)(1) The monthly substantial gainful activity level for non-blind individuals for 2010 is \$1,000.00/month.

As outlined above, the first step looks at the individual's current work activity. In the record presented, the Claimant is working however her monthly gross income falls below the substantial gainful activity level thus the Claimant is not ineligible for disability benefits under Step 1.

The severity of the Claimant's alleged impairment(s) is considered under Step 2. The Claimant bears the burden to present sufficient objective medical evidence to substantiate the alleged disabling impairments. In order to be considered disabled for MA purposes, the impairment must be severe. 20 CFR 916.920(a)(4)(ii); 20 CFR 916.920(b) An impairment, or combination of impairments, is severe if it significantly limits an individual's physical or mental ability to do basic work activities regardless of age, education and work experience. 20 CFR 916.920(a)(4)(ii); 20 CFR 916.920(c) Basic work activities means the abilities and aptitudes necessary to do most jobs. 20 CFR 916.921(b) Examples 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.

*Id.* The second step allows for dismissal of a disability claim obviously lacking in medical merit. *Higgs v Bowen*, 880 F2d 860, 862 (CA 6, 1988). The severity

requirement may still be employed as an administrative convenience to screen out claims that are totally groundless solely from a medical standpoint. *Id.* at 863 *citing Farris v Sec of Health and Human Services*, 773 F2d 85, 90 n.1 (CA 6, 1985) An impairment qualifies as non-severe only if, regardless of a claimant's age, education, or work experience, the impairment would not affect the claimant's ability to work. *Salmi v Sec of Health and Human Services*, 774 F2d 685, 692 (CA 6, 1985)

In the present case, the Claimant alleges disability due to recurrent tumors.

On [REDACTED], a Medical Examination Report was completed on behalf of the Claimant. The current diagnoses were hypertension, vertigo, anxiety, and hypercholesteremia. The Claimant's was found unable to lift any weight; stand and/or walk at least 2 hours in an 8 hour workday; sit about 6 hours during the same time period; able to perform simple grasping and fine manipulation with both upper extremities but unable to reach, push, or pull; and able to operate foot/leg controls.

There was no further medical evidence.

As previously noted, the Claimant bears the burden to present sufficient objective medical evidence to substantiate the alleged disabling impairment(s). As summarized above, the Claimant has presented some medical evidence however the Claimant testified that she currently has no real physical difficulties. Previously, in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] the Claimant had surgeries to remove large tumors. Currently, the Claimant testified that she has another tumor growing on her back thus she needs insurance to have it evaluated. An impairment, or combination of impairments, is severe if it significantly limits an individual's physical or mental ability to do basic work activities regardless of age, education and work experience. In this case, the Claim is not significantly limited in her ability to do basic work activities as evidenced by her current employment as a chore/care provider. Under these facts it is found that the Claimant's impairment(s) do not have more than a *de minimis* effect on the Claimant's basic work activities. In light of the foregoing, the Claimant is found not disabled at Step 2 with no further analysis required.

The State Disability Assistance ("SDA") program, which provides financial assistance for disabled persons, was established by 2004 PA 344. DHS administers the SDA program pursuant to MCL 400.10 *et seq.* and Michigan Administrative Code ("MAC R") 400.3151 – 400.3180. Department policies are found in BAM, BEM, and BRM. A person is considered disabled for SDA purposes if the person has a physical or mental impairment which meets federal SSI disability standards for at least ninety days. BEM 261 Receipt of SSI or RSDI benefits based on disability or blindness, or the receipt of MA benefits based on disability or blindness (MA-P) automatically qualifies an individual as disabled for purposes of the SDA program. BEM 261

In this case, there is insufficient evidence to support a finding that the Claimant's impairment has disabled her under the SSI disability standards. Accordingly, it is found that the Claimant is not disabled for purposes of the SDA program.

**DECISION AND ORDER**

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the findings of fact and conclusions of law, finds the Claimant not disabled for purposes of the Medical Assistance and State Disability Assistance programs.

Accordingly, it is ORDERED:

The Department's determination is AFFIRMED.

*Colleen M. Mamelka*

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Colleen M. Mamelka  
Administrative Law Judge  
For Ismael Ahmed, Director  
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: 07/09/2010

Date Mailed: 07/09/2010

**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 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.

CMM/

cc:

