

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

REG. No.: 2010-29408
ISSUE No.: 2009
CASE No.: [REDACTED]
HEARING DATE: MAY 11, 2010
GENESEE COUNTY DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Carmen G. Fahie

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 held on Tuesday, May 11, 2010. The claimant personally appeared and testified on her own behalf with her authorized representative, [REDACTED]

ISSUE

Did the department properly deny the claimant's application for Medical Assistance (MA-P) and Retroactive MA-P?

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. On February 25, 2009, the claimant applied for MA-P and retroactive MA-P to November 2008.
2. On April 23, 2009, the Medical Review Team (MRT) denied the claimant's application for MA-P and retroactive MA-P stating that the claimant impairment lacks duration of 12 months per 20 CFR 416.920(f).
3. On November 9, 2009, the department caseworker sent the claimant a notice that her application was denied.
4. On February 2, 2010, the department received a hearing request from the claimant, contesting the department's negative action.

5. On April 13, 2010, the State Hearing Review Team (SHRT) considered the submitted objective medical evidence in making its determination of MA-P and retroactive MA-P for the claimant. The SHRT report reads in part that The claimant is 24 years old and alleges disability due to symptomatic anemia and urinary tract infection. She has a 12th grade education and a history of unskilled and semi-skilled work. The claimant is obese, but her examination was otherwise within normal limits. The medical evidence on the record indicates that the claimant's condition is improving or is expected to improve within 12 months from the date of onset. Therefore, MA-p is denied due to lack of duration under 20 CFR §416.909. Retroactive MA-P was considered in this case and is also denied.
6. During the hearing on May 11, 2010, the claimant requested permission to submit additional medical information that needed to be reviewed by SHRT. Additional medical information was received from the local office and forwarded to SHRT for review on June 25, 2010.
7. On July 1, 2010, the SHRT considered the newly submitted objective medical evidence in making its determination of MA-P, retroactive MA-P, and SDA. The SHRT report reads in part The claimant is [REDACTED] and alleges disability due to anemia and urinary tract infection. She has a 12th grade education and a history of semi-skilled work. The claimant is obese, but her examination was otherwise within normal limits. The claimant's impairments do not meet/equal the intent or severity of a Social Security listing. Therefore, MA-p is denied due to lack of duration under 20 CFR §416.909. Retroactive MA-P was considered in this case and is also denied. The claimant is capable of performing other work that is light work per 20 CFR 416.967(b) under vocational rule 202.21.
8. The claimant is a [REDACTED] whose date of birth is [REDACTED]. The claimant is 5' 7" tall and weighs 376 pounds. The claimant has a high school education and 3 years of college. The claimant can read and write and do basic math. The claimant was last employed as a cashier in August 2006. The claimant has also been employed as a tutor and babysitter.
9. The claimant's alleged impairments are sleep apnea, morbid obesity, urinary tract infection, symptomatic anemia, migraines, and left leg fracture as the result of an automobile accident in 2007.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Medical Assistance (MA) program is established by the 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 (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) 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).

"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.

...We follow a set order to determine whether you are disabled. We review any current work activity, the severity of your impairment(s), your residual functional capacity, your past work, and your age, education and work experience. If we can find that you are disabled or not disabled at any point in the review, we do not review your claim further.... 20 CFR 416.920.

...If you are working and the work you are doing is substantial gainful activity, we will find that you are not disabled regardless of your medical condition or your age, education, and work experience. 20 CFR 416.920(b).

...[The impairment]...must have lasted or must be expected to last for a continuous period of at least 12 months. We call this the duration requirement. 20 CFR 416.909.

...If you do not have any impairment or combination of impairments which significantly limits your physical or mental ability to do basic work activities, we will find that you do not have a severe impairment and are, therefore, not disabled.

We will not consider your age, education, and work experience. 20 CFR 416.920(c).

[In reviewing your impairment]...We need reports about your impairments from acceptable medical sources.... 20 CFR 416.913(a).

...Statements about your pain or other symptoms will not alone establish that you are disabled; there must be medical

signs and laboratory findings which show that you have a medical impairment.... 20 CFR 416.929(a).

...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).

... [The record must show a severe impairment] which significantly limits your physical or mental ability to do basic work activities.... 20 CFR 416.920(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 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).

Information from other sources may also help us to understand how your impairment(s) affects your ability to work. 20 CFR 416.913(e).

...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).

...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).

...In deciding whether you are disabled, we will always consider the medical opinions in your case record together with the rest of the relevant evidence we receive. 20 CFR 416.927(b).

After we review all of the evidence relevant to your claim, including medical opinions, we make findings about what the evidence shows. 20 CFR 416.927(c).

...If all of the evidence we receive, including all medical opinion(s), is consistent, and there is sufficient evidence for us to decide whether you are disabled, we will make our determination or decision based on that evidence. 20 CFR 416.927(c)(1).

...If any of the evidence in your case record, including any medical opinion(s), is inconsistent with other evidence or is internally inconsistent, we will weigh all of the evidence and see whether we can decide whether you are disabled based on the evidence we have. 20 CFR 416.927(c)(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).

...If you have an impairment(s) which meets the duration requirement and is listed in Appendix 1 or is equal to a listed impairment(s), we will find you disabled without considering your age, education, and work experience. 20 CFR 416.920(d).

...If we cannot make a decision on your current work activities or medical facts alone and you have a severe impairment, we will then review your residual functional capacity and the physical and mental demands of the work you have done in the past. If you can still do this kind of work, we will find that you are not disabled. 20 CFR 416.920(e).

If you cannot do any work you have done in the past because you have a severe impairment(s), we will consider your residual functional capacity and your age, education, and past work experience to see if you can do other work. If you cannot, we will find you disabled. 20 CFR 416.920(f)(1).

...Your residual functional capacity is what you can still do despite limitations. If you have more than one impairment, we will consider all of your impairment(s) of which we are aware. We will consider your ability to meet certain demands of jobs, such as physical demands, mental demands, sensory requirements, and other functions, as described in paragraphs (b), (c) and (d) of this section. Residual functional capacity is an assessment based on all of the relevant evidence.... 20 CFR 416.945(a).

...This assessment of your remaining capacity for work is not a decision on whether you are disabled, but is used as the basis for determining the particular types of work you may be able to do despite your impairment(s).... 20 CFR 416.945(a).

...In determining whether you are disabled, we will consider all of your symptoms, including pain, and the extent to which your symptoms can reasonably be accepted as consistent with objective medical evidence, and other evidence.... 20 CFR 416.929(a).

...In evaluating the intensity and persistence of your symptoms, including pain, we will consider all of the available evidence, including your medical history, the medical signs and laboratory findings and statements about how your symptoms affect you... We will then determine the extent to which your alleged functional limitations or restrictions due to pain or other symptoms can reasonably be accepted as consistent with the medical signs and laboratory findings and other evidence to decide how your symptoms affect your ability to work.... 20 CFR 416.929(a).

If you have more than one impairment, we will consider all of your impairments of which we are aware. We will consider your ability to meet certain demands of jobs, such as physical demands, mental demands, sensory requirements, and other functions as described in paragraphs (b), (c) and (d) of this section. Residual functional capacity is an assessment based upon all of the relevant evidence. This assessment of your capacity for work is not a decision on whether you are disabled but is used as a basis for determining the particular types of work you may be able to do despite your impairment. 20 CFR 416.945.

...When we assess your physical abilities, we first assess the nature and extent of your physical limitations and then determine your residual functional capacity for work activity on a regular and continuing basis. A limited ability to perform certain physical demands of work activity, such as sitting, standing, walking, lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, or other physical functions (including manipulative or postural functions, such as reaching, handling, stooping or crouching), may reduce your ability to do past work and other work. 20 CFR 416.945(b).

Federal regulations require that the department use the same operative definition for “disabled” as used for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) under Title XVI of the Social Security Act. 42 CFR 435.540(a).

“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

In determining whether an individual is disabled, 20 CFR 416.920 requires the trier of fact to follow a sequential evaluation process by which current work activity, the severity of the impairment(s), residual functional capacity, and vocational factors (i.e., age, education, and work experience) are assessed in that order. When a determination that an individual is or is not disabled can be made at any step in the sequential evaluation, evaluation under a subsequent step is not necessary.

First, the trier of fact must determine if the individual is working and if the work is substantial gainful activity. 20 CFR 416.920(b). At Step 1, the claimant is not engaged in substantial gainful activity and has not worked since August 2006. Therefore, the claimant is not disqualified from receiving disability at Step 1.

Secondly, in order to be considered disabled for purposes of MA, a person must have a severe impairment. 20 CFR 416.920(c). A severe impairment is an impairment which significantly limits an individual’s physical or mental ability to perform basic work activities. Basic work activities means, 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).

The purpose of the second step in the sequential evaluation process is to screen out claims lacking in medical merit. *Higgs v. Bowen* 880 F2d 860, 862 (6th Cir, 1988). As a result, the department may only screen out claims at this level which are “totally groundless” solely from a medical standpoint. The *Higgs* court used the severity requirement as a “*de minimus* hurdle” in the disability determination. The *de minimus* standard is a provision of a law that allows the court to disregard trifling matters.

The objective medical evidence on the record further substantiates the following:

On [REDACTED], the claimant’s treating physician completed a Medical Examination Report, DHS-49, for the claimant. The claimant was first examined on January 5, 2009 AND last examined on [REDACTED] 0. The claimant had a history of impairment, current diagnosis, and chief complaint of dysfunctional uterine bleeding, morbid obesity, anemia, chronic pain for left femur fracture, and sleep apnea. The claimant had an essentially normal physical examination and the treating physician noted sleep apnea, tenderness in lower abdomen, generalized fatigue, uses a cane to walk, and pain at 8/10. The treating physician’s clinical impression was that the claimant was stable and had limitations. The claimant could never lift any weight. The claimant could stand/walk 30 to 45 minutes in a workday. The claimant needed a cane as AN ASSISTIVE DEVICE medically that was required or needed for ambulation. The claimant could use both hands/arms for repetitive action. the medical findings that the support the above physical limitations was anemia of iron deficiency secondary to dysfunctional uterine bleeds, chronic pain of the left femur secondary to a n automobile accident that resulted in the fracture of the left femur. The claimant had no mental limitations and could meet her needs in the home. (Department Exhibit a1-a2)

On [REDACTED], the claimant’s treating ob/gyn physician completed a Medical Examination Report, DHS-49, for the claimant. The claimant was first examined on February 5, 2009 and last examined on [REDACTED]. The claimant had a history of impairment, current diagnosis, and chief complaint of abnormal uterine bleeding. The claimant had an essentially normal physical examination and the treating physician noted that she was morbidly obese. The treating physician’s clinical impression was that the claimant had a temporary disability and was expected go return to work in 1 to 2 months. The claimant could not lift any weight. There were no assistive devices

medically required or needed for ambulation. The claimant had no mental limitations and could meet her needs in the home. (Department Exhibit 6-7)

On [REDACTED] 9, the claimant's treating ob/gyn physician completed a Medical Needs, FIA 54a on behalf of the claimant. The claimant's diagnosis was abnormal uterine bleeding which was not a chronic ongoing illness. treatment was required for one month. the CLAIMANT WAS ambulatory, did not need special transportation, or anyone to accompany her to her medical appointment. the claimant could work her usual job or any job. (Department Exhibit 5)

on [REDACTED], the claimant was admitted to [REDACTED] with a discharge date of [REDACTED]. the claimant's discharge diagnosis was microcytic hypochromic anemia, urinary tract infection, metromenorrhagia, and morbid obesity. the claimant was treated with IV iron of two doses. the claimant slowly got better and her hemoglobin started to improve. She was also transfused with 5 units of packed RBC's during her stay. she was treated with antibiotics for urinary tract infection. the claimant was counselled about diet and lifestyle modifications. she was stable at discharge. (Department Exhibit 30-33)

At Step 2, the objective medical evidence in the record indicates that the claimant has not established that she has a severe impairment. The claimant was diagnosed with metromenorrhagia, which resulted in anemia. Her condition is expected to improve and not meet duration. Her physical exam was essentially normal except for her morbid obesity and limitations resulted from her left leg that was broken in a car crash in 2007. Therefore, the claimant is disqualified from receiving disability at Step 2. However, this Administrative Law Judge will PROCEED through the sequential evaluation process to determine disability because Step 2 is a *de minimus* standard.

In the third step of the sequential consideration of a disability claim, the trier of fact must determine if the claimant's impairment (or combination of impairments) is listed in Appendix 1 of Subpart P of 20 CFR, Part 404. This Administrative Law Judge finds that the claimant's medical record will not support a finding that claimant's impairment(s) is a "listed impairment" or equal to a listed impairment. See Appendix 1 of Subpart P of 20 CFR, Part 404, Part A. Accordingly, claimant cannot be found to be disabled based upon medical evidence alone. 20 CFR 416.920(d). This Administrative Law Judge finds that the claimant's impairments do not rise to the level necessary to be listed as disabling by law. Therefore, the claimant is disqualified from receiving disability at Step 3.

In the fourth step of the sequential consideration of a disability claim, the trier of fact must determine if the claimant's impairment(s) prevents claimant from doing past relevant work. 20 CFR 416.920(e). It is the finding of this Administrative Law Judge, based upon the medical evidence and objective, physical and psychological findings that the claimant does have a driver's license and does drive, but has difficulty driving long distances because her leg goes numb. she does not cook because she does not know how. She grocery shops once a month by getting little things and gets out quick

without standing in line long. The claimant does clean her own home by making the bed and doing laundry. her hobbies are reading. She does not do any outside work. The claimant felt that her condition has worsened in the past year because she has an increase in pain of her left knee, migraines, and arthritis in her hands.

The claimant wakes up between 12 and 1 p.m. She watches tv. she eats cereal for breakfast. the claimant reads books. she has a hard time sleeping. She goes to bed between 1 and 4 a.m.

The claimant felt that she could walk 1 block. The longest she felt she could stand was 5/10 minutes. The longest she felt she could sit was 10/15 minutes. The heaviest weight she felt she could carry was 5 to 10 pounds. The claimant's level of pain on a scale from 1 to 10 without medication is a 10 that decreases to A 5/6 with medication.

The claimant has not smoked since she was 18 years old where before she SMOKED 1 to 2 a week. She drinks alcohol occassionally. the claimant has not, or has ever done illegal or illicit drugs. She did not think there was any work she could do.

At Step 4, this Administrative Law Judge finds that the claimant has not established that she cannot perform any of her prior work. The claimant was previously employed as a cashier, tutor, and babysitter. The claimant is being treated for anemia through medication and her menorrhagia through birth control pills. She may have difficulty sustaining the activity of babysitting a child or tutor, but should be able to perform her past work as a cashier. The claimant should be able to perform at least light work. THEREFORE, the claimant is disqualified from receiving disability at Step 4. However, the Administrative Law Judge will still proceed through the sequential evaluation process to determine whether or not the claimant has the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in her prior jobs.

In the fifth step of the sequential consideration of a disability claim, the trier of fact must determine if the claimant's impairment(s) prevents claimant from doing other work. 20 CFR 416.920(f). This determination is based upon the claimant's:

- (1) residual functional capacity defined simply as "what can you still do despite you limitations?" 20 CFR 416.945;
- (2) age, education, and work experience, 20 CFR 416.963-.965; and
- (3) the kinds of work which exist in significant numbers in the national economy which the claimant could perform despite his/her limitations. 20 CFR 416.966.

...To determine the physical exertion requirements of work in the national economy, we classify jobs as sedentary, light,

medium, heavy, and very 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).

...To be considered capable of performing a full or wide range of light work, you must have the ability to do substantially all of these activities. If someone can do light work, we determine that he or she can also do sedentary work, unless there are additional limiting factors such as loss of fine dexterity or inability to sit for long periods of time. 20 CFR 416.967(b).

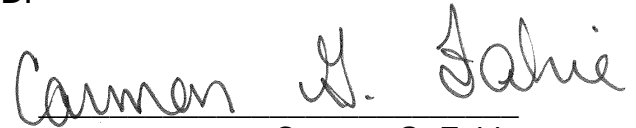
The objective medical evidence on the record is insufficient that the claimant lacks the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in her previous employment or that she is physically unable to do any tasks demanded of her. The claimant's testimony as to her limitation indicates her limitations are exertional.

At Step 5, the claimant should be able to meet the physical requirements of light work, based upon the claimant's physical abilities. Under the Medical-Vocational guidelines, a younger individual with a high school education, and an unskilled work history, who is limited to light work, is not considered disabled. 20 CFR 404, Subpart P, Appendix 2, Rule 202.20. Using the Medical-Vocational guidelines as a framework for making this decision and after giving full consideration to the claimant's physical impairments, the Administrative Law Judge finds that the claimant can still perform a wide range of light activities and that the claimant does not meet the definition of disabled under the MA program.

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 that it was acting in compliance with department policy when it denied the claimant's application for MA-P and retroactive MA-P. The claimant should be able to perform any level of light work. The department has established its case by a preponderance of the evidence.

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



Carmen G. Fahie
Administrative Law Judge
For Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

DATE SIGNED: 12/29/11

DATE MAILED: 12/29/11

NOTICE: Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS) 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. MAHS 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. (60 days for FAP cases).

The Claimant may appeal the Decision and Order to Circuit Court within 30 days of the receipt 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.

Claimant may request a rehearing or reconsideration for the following reasons:

- A rehearing **MAY** be granted if there is newly discovered evidence that could affect the outcome of the original hearing decision.
- A reconsideration **MAY** be granted for any of the following reasons:
 - misapplication of manual policy or law in the hearing decision,
 - typographical errors, mathematical error, or other obvious errors in the hearing decision that effect the substantial rights of the claimant:
 - the failure of the ALJ to address other relevant issues in the hearing decision.

Request must be submitted through the local DHS office or directly to MAHS by mail to:

Michigan Administrative hearings
Reconsideration/Rehearing Request
P. O. Box 30639
Lansing, Michigan 48909-07322

CGF / hw

CC:

