

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

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No: 2010-54685
Issue No: 2009; 4031
Case No: [REDACTED]
Load No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date:
November 4, 2010
Missaukee 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 November 4, 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 March 25, 2010, claimant filed an application for Medical Assistance and State Disability Assistance benefits alleging disability.
- (2) On May 11, 2010, the Medical Review Team denied claimant's application stating that claimant's impairment's do not meet duration.
- (3) On May 14, 2010, the department caseworker sent claimant notice that his application was denied.
- (4) On July 21, 2010, claimant filed a request for a hearing to contest the department's negative action.
- (5) On October 5, 2010, the State Hearing Review Team again denied claimant's application stating in its' analysis and decision: the objective medical evidence presented does not establish a disability at the listing or equivalence level. In following a sequential evaluation process, the

claimant is not engaged in substantial gainful activity. The claimant's impairment's do not meet/equal the intent of a Social Security listing. Therefore, MA-P is denied per 20 CFR 416.909; durational and per 20 CFR 416.967(c); capacity to perform at least medium unskilled work. Retro MA-P was reviewed and denied. SDA was denied per PEM 261.

- (6) Claimant is a 30-year-old man whose birth date is [REDACTED]. Claimant is 5'4" tall and weighs 280 pounds. Claimant is a high school graduate and has attended 1 year of college. Claimant is able to read and write and does have basic math skills.
- (10) Claimant last worked in December 2008, as a [REDACTED]. Claimant has also worked as a direct care worker, at [REDACTED] in janitorial and at [REDACTED]. Claimant receives unemployment compensation benefits in the amount of \$ [REDACTED] every two weeks.
- (11) Claimant alleges as disabling impairments: Testicular cancer, attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD).

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

In addition, claimant does receive unemployment compensation benefits. In order to receive unemployment compensation benefits under the federal regulations, a person must be monetarily eligible. They must be totally or partially unemployed. They must have an approvable job separation. Also, they must meet certain legal requirements which include being physically and mentally able to work, being available for and seeking work, and filing a weekly claim for benefits on a timely basis. The Administrative Law Judge finds that claimant has not established that he has a severe impairment or combination of impairments which have lasted or will last the durational requirement of 12 months or more or have kept him from working for a period of 12 months or more. Claimant did last work in 2008. Claimant does receive unemployment compensation benefits in the amount of \$[REDACTED] every two weeks. Claimant is disqualified from receiving disability at step 1 as he holds himself out as being able to work.

The objective medical evidence on the record indicates that claimant testified on the record that he lives with his parents and he is single with no children under 18. Claimant receives unemployment compensation benefits and Food Assistance Program benefits. Claimant testified that he does drive daily 10 miles, to the store to get groceries and to Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Claimant does cook 2-3 times per week and cooks things like macaroni and cheese, and beef tips with rice. Claimant testified that his parents grocery shop for him but he does clean his home by vacuuming, doing dishes and laundry and he cuts the grass with a riding lawnmower. Claimant testified that his hobby is to volunteer at the fire department and he usually is called every couple of weeks as needed. Claimant testified that he can stand for 8-12

hours, and sit with no limits. Claimant has no limits on his ability to walk and is able to squat, bend at the waist, shower and dress himself, tie his shoes but not touch his toes because of his weight. Claimant testified that his knees are fine except he does have some fluid on them and his level of pain on a scale from 1-10 without medication is a 2-4 and with medication is a 2-3. Claimant testified that he is left handed and his hands and feet are fine and his legs and feet are fine. Claimant testified that the heaviest weight that he can carry is 75 pounds and he can carry 20 pounds repetitively. Claimant testified that he does smoke $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pack of cigarettes per day and his doctor has told him to quit and is not in a smoking cessation program. Claimant testified that he used to use Vicodin, Norco and prescription drugs illegally and he stopped in August 2009. Claimant testified that in a typical day he takes care of his 88 year old grandmother by helping her shower, giving her medication and assisting her with her activities of daily living. Claimant testified that he has not been hospitalized in the last year. The medical records of evidence presented for review reported that claimant's status post right testicle orchietomy with radiation treatment February 5, 2010 (p. 16).

A physical examination of March 25, 2010, there were no mental limitations. The heart was functioning with normal rate and rhythm. Blood pressure was 124/78. Peripheral pulses were present and equal bilaterally. The lungs were clear to auscultation. The wound was healing. There were no infection or skin lesions (p. 16). There was no objective clinical information submitted to document a learning deficit. The claimant is very functional in daily activity functions. He has a work history comparable to his educational level. He is not receiving mental health treatments and is not on medication (pp. 11, 15-16).

A physical examination February 16, 2010, he was 265 pounds and his blood pressure was 118/78. The sclerae and icteric. The oral cavity and oropharynx are clear without wheezes. The neck had no palpable cervical, supraclavicular, axillary, or inguinal lymphadenopathy noted. Thorax and the lungs: the lungs were clear. In the musculoskeletal the back was non-tender. In the cardiovascular area, the heart revealed a regular rate and rhythm. The abdomen was soft without palpable mass or hepatosplenomegaly. Bowel sounds were active. The surgical incision sight appeared to be healing well in the right inguinal region. There is no evidence of infection or tumors nodularity noted. The penil shaft and remaining left testicle were palpably unremarkable. The extremities were without cyanosis or edema (p. 21).

A CT was done at spectrum, which did show that there was no metastatic disease. Radiation was being used for his lymphnodes (p. 16). The doctor talked to him about cigarette smoking and the fact that he is a cancer survivor, which the doctor thought was a horrible decision. The doctor also indicated that claimant needed to lose some weight and eat better (p. 17).

A medical examination report in the file dated March 25, 2010, indicates that the claimant was 64" tall and weighed 279 pounds, and his blood pressure was 124/76 and he was right hand dominant. He was normal in all areas of examination. The clinic al impression is that claimant was stable and he had no real limitations. He could

frequently carry 25 pounds or less, and could occasionally carry 50 pounds or more. Claimant could sit about 6 hours in an 8 hour work day and he did not need assistive devices for ambulation. He could use both upper extremities for simple grasping, reaching, pushing and pulling and fine manipulating, and could operate foot and leg controls with both feet and legs. He had some problems with sustained concentration and depression (pp. 3-5)..

At Step 2, claimant has the burden of proof of establishing that she 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.

Claimant alleges the following disabling mental impairments: ADHD and depression.

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 younger individual (age 30), with a high school education and an unskilled work history who is limited to light work is not considered disabled.

It should be noted that claimant continues to smoke despite the fact that his doctor has told him to quit. Claimant is not in compliance with his treatment program.

If an individual fails to follow prescribed treatment which would be expected to restore their ability to engage in substantial activity without good cause there will not be a finding of disability.... 20 CFR 416.994(b)(4)(iv).

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 in compliance with department policy when it denied claimant's application for Medical Assistance, retroactive Medical Assistance and State Disability 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.

Landis

/s/

Y. Lain
Administrative Law Judge
for Ismael Ahmed, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: November 24, 2010

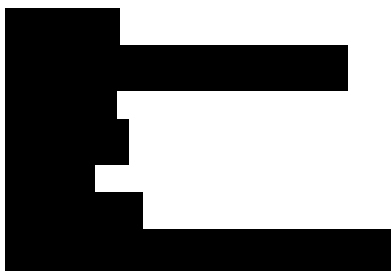
Date Mailed: November 29, 2010

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.

LYL/alc

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