

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

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No: 2010-15427
Issue No: 2009
Case No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date:
April 12, 2010
Wayne County DHS (17)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Landis Y. Lain

RECONSIDERATION 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 scheduled for October 4, 2011. Neither Claimant and nor her representative appeared at the scheduled hearing. No additional medical information was provided to this Administrative Law Judge for consideration.

ISSUE

Did the Department of Human Services (the department) properly deny claimant's application for Medical Assistance (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 May 9, 2009, claimant filed an application for Medical Assistance, State Disability Assistance and Retroactive Medical Assistance benefits alleging disability.
- (2) On July 21, 2009, the Medical Review Team denied claimant's application stating that claimant's impairment's do not meet duration.
- (3) On July 28, 2009, the department caseworker sent claimant notice that the application was denied.
- (4) On September 17, 2009, claimant filed a request for a hearing to contest the department's negative action.
- (5) On January 7, 2010, the State Hearing Review Team again denied claimant's application.

- (6) The hearing was held on April 12, 2010. At the hearing, claimant waived the time periods and requested to submit additional medical information.
- (7) The record was left open for 60 days to allow the department to obtain additional medical information.
- (8) No new information was provided to the ALJ and on January 25, 2011, the ALJ Owens closed the record and issued a decision and order based on the information contained in the file.
- (9) Claimant is 44 years old.
- (10) Claimant completed education through some college.
- (11) Claimant has employment experience in construction.
- (12) Claimant alleges that she suffers from gum disease, facial cellulitis, urinary incontinence and degenerative disc disease.
- (13) Claimant alleges that she has significant limitations on physical activities involving sitting, standing, walking, bending, lifting, and stooping.
- (14) On January 25, 2011, Administrative Law Judge Jonathan Owens signed and mailed a Decision and Order Affirming the department's determination that claimant was not disabled.
- (15) On February 23, 2011, a Petition was filed in the Wayne County Circuit Court, appealing the decision of ALJ Owen.
- (16) On June 15, 2011, the Assistant Attorney General and claimant stipulated: to remand the case to administrative hearings and allow claimant to submit additional medical records, and for the assigned Administrative Law Judge to make a determination regarding claimant's May 19, 2009, Medical Assistance application.
- (17) On July 26, 2011, Administrative Law Judge Marya Nelson Davis issued an Order for Remand and granted claimant 30 days in which to provide the additional medical information requested in the April 12, 2010, Interim Order Leaving the Record open.
- (18) No additional information was submitted by claimant or her representative by October 13, 2011.

- (19) Neither claimant nor her representative appeared for a hearing scheduled October 4, 2011. Neither claimant nor her representative notified the department or Administrative Hearings that they needed extra time to provide the additional information, or assistance in obtaining the information.

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).

A **reconsideration** is a paper review of the facts, law and any new evidence or legal arguments. It is granted when the original hearing record is adequate for purposes of judicial review and a rehearing is **not** necessary, but one of the parties believes the ALJ failed to accurately address all the relevant issues **raised in the hearing request**.

Rehearing/ Reconsideration Requests

All Programs

The department, client or authorized hearing representative may file a written request for rehearing/reconsideration. Request a rehearing/ reconsideration when one of the following exists:

- Newly discovered evidence that existed at the time of the original hearing, and that could affect the outcome of the original hearing decision.
- Misapplication of manual policy or law in the hearing decision which led to a wrong conclusion.
- Typographical, mathematical, or other obvious error in the hearing decision that affects the rights of the client.
- Failure of the ALJ to address in the hearing decision relevant issues raised in the hearing request.

The Department, AHR or the client must specify all reasons for the request.

A written request made by the AHR or, if none, by the client, must be faxed to:

- (517) 335-6088- Attention: SOAHR Client Requested Rehearing/Reconsideration
- SOAHR (now MAHS) will not review any response filed to any rehearing/reconsideration requests.

A request must be received within 30 days of the date the hearing decision is mailed. The request must be received as follows:

- Department request -- received in SOAHR (MAHS).
- Client or authorized hearing representative request -- received anywhere in DHS.

Granting A Rehearing/ Reconsideration

All Programs

SOAHR (MAHS) will either grant or deny a rehearing/reconsideration request and will send written notice of the decision to all parties to the original hearing. SOAHR (MAHS) grants a rehearing/reconsideration request if:

- The information in the request justifies it; **and**
- **There is time to rehear/reconsider the case and implement the resulting decision within the standard of promptness; see STANDARDS OF PROMPTNESS in this item.**
- **If the** client or authorized hearing representative made the request and it is impossible to meet the standard of promptness, the client or authorized hearing representative may waive the timeliness requirement in writing to allow the rehearing/reconsideration.

All Programs

Pending a rehearing or reconsideration request, implement the original Decision and Order unless a circuit court or other court with jurisdiction issues an Order which requires a delay or stay.

If such an order is received by the client, SOAHR, the court or the Legal Affairs, or if there are questions about implementing the order; see Administrative Handbook manual Legal & FOIA Issues (AHN) item 1100, How to Obtain Legal Services. BEM, Item 600.

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

In the present case, Claimant has been diagnosed with gum disease, facial cellulitis, urinary incontinence and degenerative disc disease. Claimant has a number of symptoms and limitations, as cited above, as a result of these conditions. Claimant's treating physician noted that Claimant would be able to stand and walk for about 2 hours in an 8-hour day, sit for about 6 hours in an 8-hour day and lift occasionally up to 10 lbs. This physician indicated his findings were based upon a physical exam and subjective complaints. (pages 14-15)

The restrictions imposed by this physician are not supported by acceptable medical evidence consisting of clinical signs, symptoms, laboratory or test findings, or evaluative techniques and are not consistent with other substantial evidence in the record. Claimant's physician did not present sufficient medical evidence to support his opinion. The evidence presented failed to support the position that Claimant is incapable of a full range of at least sedentary work activities. See 20 CFR 416.927c (2) and 416.927d(3) and (4).

The other objective medical evidence on the record indicates in a July 7, 2009 physical examination that claimant was 5'4" and weighed 164lbs. Pulse: 66, Respirations: 14. Blood Pressure: 126/58. Vision without glasses: 20/40 on the right and 20/70 on the left. HEENT: Normocephalic/atramatic. Eyes: lids are normal. There is no exophthalmos, icterus, conjunctival erythema or exudates noted. PERRLA. Extraocular movements intact. The claimant was alert and oriented x3. Cranial nerves II-XII were intact. No evidence of focal muscle atrophy in upper or lower extremity. Muscle strength was normal in all extremities. Muscle strength 5/5. Coordination is intact. Musculoskeletal range of motion was normal. No significant muscle atrophy. Tone and strength are symmetrical. (page 4) The patient is able to get dressed, button clothing, tie shoelaces,

pick up a coin, pencil and write. The patient was able to ambulate without a cane with a normal gait pattern. The patient was able to heel walk, toe walk and tandem walk. The patient can sit and stand. Able to stoop, carry, push and pull. Based on the examination the physician felt that the patient could work 4-6 hours per day. No limitation in walking, carrying, pushing or pulling. Grip strength is not limited in the hands.

Limitation in climbing ropes, ladders or scaffolding. (Page 5)

A medical examination report dated June 4, 2010 indicates that claimant has a temporary disability with an expected return to work date of June 1, 2010. she could occasionally lift ten pounds or less and rarely lift 20 pounds. She could stand or walk at least two hours in a 8 hour work day and sit about 6 hours in an 8 hour work day. She could use upper extremities for simple grasping, reaching, and fine manipulating but not pushing or pulling. She had no mental limitations and could not operate foot or leg controls. (page A5-6)

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 her 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 herself from tasks associated with occupational functioning based upon her 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 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 her burden of proof at Step 2. Claimant must be denied benefits at this step based upon her 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 she 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 her again at Step 4 based upon her ability to perform her 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 she has engaged in, in the past. Therefore, if claimant had not already been denied at Step 2, she 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 her 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 she lacks the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in her prior employment or that she is physically unable to do light or sedentary tasks if demanded of her. Claimant's activities of daily living do not appear to be very limited and she should be able to perform light or sedentary work even with her impairments. Claimant has failed to provide the necessary objective medical evidence to establish that she has a severe impairment or combination of impairments which prevent her from performing any level of work for a period of 12 months. The claimant's testimony as to her limitations indicates that she 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 she has not established by objective medical evidence that she cannot perform light or sedentary work even with her impairments. Under the Medical-Vocational guidelines, a younger individual (age 43), with a more than high school education and an unskilled work history who is limited to light work is not considered disabled pursuant to medical vocational rule 203.28.

Claimant is an individual of younger age. 20 CFR 416.963. Claimant has some college education. 20 CFR 416.964. Claimant's previous work was semi-skilled but skills are not transferable. Federal Rule 20 CFR 404, Subpart P, Appendix 2, contains specific profiles for determining disability based on residual functional capacity and vocational profiles. Under Table I, Rule 201.28, Claimant is not disabled for purposes of MA.

It should be noted that claimant continued to smoke despite the fact that her doctor has told her to quit and despite the fact that she was being treated for asthma/ chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (secondary to smoking)). Claimant is not in compliance with her 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).

Upon reconsideration, neither Claimant and nor her representative appeared at the scheduled hearing. No additional medical information was provided to this

Administrative Law Judge for consideration. The original decision and order by Administrative Law Judge Jonathan Owen must be UPHELD.

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 or Retroactive Medical Assistance Benefits.

DECISION AND ORDER OF DISMISSAL

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 benefits. The department has established its case by a preponderance of the evidence. Claimant failed to appear for the hearing and failed to provide additional medical information.

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: October 17, 2011

Date Mailed: October 17, 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.

2011-21754 REMAND of 201115427/LYL

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

cc:


Wayne County DHS (17)


L. Y. Lain
MAHS