

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

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

[REDACTED]

Reg. No: 201234583  
Issue No: 2009, 4031  
Case No: [REDACTED]  
Hearing Date: April 25, 2012  
Menominee County DHS

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:** William A. Sundquist

**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 Wednesday, April 25, 2012. Claimant appeared and provided testimony on his behalf. The Department's witnesses were [REDACTED]

The record was extended 90 days for a 2<sup>nd</sup> SHRT review of medical reports introduced at the hearing (Claimant Exhibit A).

**ISSUE**

Was disability, as defined below, medically established?

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

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

1. MA-P/SDA application on October 13, 2011 was denied on February 14, 2012 per BEM 260/261, with a hearing request on February 17, 2012.
2. Vocational factors: Age 34, high school education, and skilled work history.
3. Last employment ended July 2011.
4. Disability is alleged due to bulging disc in neck.
5. Medical reports state the Claimant on:

- a. November 16, 2010, had **mild** circumferential bulging of disc; that there is a minimal disc osteophyte complex posterior laterally on the left side causing mild narrowing of the origin of the left-sided neural foramen (Medical Packet, Page 39).
  - b. April 4, 2011, his alignment of the cervical spine is normal; that he has localized moderate to severe degenerative disc space narrowing involves the C6-C7 level with associated marginal spurring; that he has uncovertebral joint hypertrophy bilaterally; and that otherwise the examination was unremarkable (Medical Packet, Page 34).
  - c. October 26, 2011, regarding C2-3 and C3-4 levels there are no degenerative changes; that at C4-5 there is mild disc desiccation and minimal bulge without herniation, canal or foramen stenosis; and that at C5-6 there is no significant degenerative changes (Claimant Exhibit A, Page 3).
  - d. December 5, 2011, was able to sustain head lift greater than 5 seconds; that left and right grasp was strong; and that left and right leg movement were strong (Claimant Exhibit A, Page 51).
6. SHRT decision dated March 27, 2012 states the Claimant's impairments do not meet/equal a Social Security listing (Medical Packet, Page 164).

### **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 Program Administrative Manual (BAM), the Program 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 Program Administrative Manual (BAM), the Program Eligibility Manual (BEM) and the Program Reference Manual (PRM).

Facts above are undisputed.

"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.

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.

...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.

The Claimant has the burden of proof to establish disability as defined above by the preponderance of the evidence of record and in accordance with the 5 step process below. 20 CFR 416.912(a).

When determining disability, the federal regulations are used as a guideline and 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, the evidence of record established the Claimant has not been engaged in substantial gainful work since July 2011.

At Step 2, the medical evidence of record, on date of application, does not establish the Claimant's significant functional incapacity to perform basic work activities due to a combination severe physical impairment for a one year continuous duration, as defined below.

### **Severe/Non-Severe Impairment**

...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).

**Non-severe impairment(s).** An impairment or combination of impairments is not severe if it does not significantly limit your physical or mental ability to do basic work activities. 20 CFR 416.921(a).

**Basic work activities.** When we talk about basic work activities, we mean 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).

### **Severe Impairment**

To qualify for MA-P, claimant must first satisfy both the gainful work and the duration criteria (20 CFR 416.920(a)) before further review under severity criteria. If claimant does not have any impairment or combination of impairments which significantly limits physical or mental ability to do basic work activities, an ultimately favorable disability determination cannot result. (20 CFR 416.920(c)).

The medical reports of record are examination, diagnostic and treatment reports. They do not provide medical assessments of Claimant's physical limitations relative to his functional incapacity to perform basic work activities, as defined above. 20 CFR 416.913(c)(1) and (2). Stated differently, does the physical impairment medically impair the Claimant slightly, mildly, moderately (non-severe impairment, as defined above) or severely, as defined above?

The medical evidence of record does not establish a severe physical impairment meeting the 1 year continuous duration requirement. It established a non-severe impairment.

Therefore, disability is denied at Step 2.

If disability had not already been denied at Step 2, it would also be denied at Steps 3, 4 and 5. The medical evidence or record, on date of application, for the required duration, does not establish Claimant's impairments meet/equal a Social Security listing at Step 3, inability to perform any past work at Step 4, and without a residual functional capacity (RFC) to perform any other work in the National Economy at Step 5.

Therefore, disability has not been established at Step 2 and also has not been established at Steps 3, 4 and 5 by the competent, material and substantial evidence on the whole record.

**DECISION AND ORDER**

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that disability was not medically established.

Accordingly, MA-P/SDA denial is **UPHELD**.

/s/  
William A. Sundquist  
Administrative Law Judge  
For Maura D. Corrigan, Director  
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: June 22, 2012

Date Mailed: June 25, 2012

**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.

WAS/tb

cc:

