

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

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 201277973  
Issue No.: 2009  
Case No.: [REDACTED]  
Hearing Date: February 7, 2013  
County: Wayne DHS (18)

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:** Christian Gardocki

**HEARING DECISION**

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and MCL 400.37 following Claimant's request for a hearing. After due notice, an in-person hearing was held on February 7, 2013, from Taylor, Michigan. Participants included the above-named claimant. [REDACTED] testified on behalf of Claimant. Participants on behalf of Department of Human Services (DHS) included [REDACTED] - [REDACTED] Medical Contact Worker.

**ISSUE**

The issue is whether DHS properly denied Claimant's application for Medical Assistance (MA) on the basis that Claimant is not a disabled individual.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

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

1. On 5/10/12, Claimant applied for MA benefits (see Exhibits 50-52), including retroactive MA benefits from 3/2012 (see Exhibits 48-49).
2. Claimant's only basis for MA benefits was as a disabled individual.
3. On 6/19/12, the Medical Review Team (MRT) determined that Claimant was not a disabled individual (see Exhibits 2-3).
4. On 6/22/12, DHS denied Claimant's application for MA benefits and mailed a Notice of Case Action (Exhibits 33-36) informing Claimant of the denial.

5. On 9/12/12, DHS received a hearing request on behalf of Claimant disputing the denial of MA benefits.
6. On 10/24/12, the State Hearing Review Team (SHRT) determined that Claimant was not a disabled individual (see Exhibit 53), in part, by determining that Claimant's condition will improve within 12 months.
7. On 2/7/13, an administrative hearing was held.
8. Following the hearing, Claimant presented new medical documents (Exhibits A1-A67).
9. The new medical documents were forwarded to SHRT.
10. On 5/28/13, SHRT determined that Claimant was not a disabled individual, in part, by application of Medical-Vocational Rule 202.13.
11. As of the date of the administrative hearing, Claimant was a [REDACTED] year old male with a height of 5'7" and weight of 160 pounds.
12. Claimant is a tobacco smoker with no known relevant history of alcohol or drug abuse.
13. Claimant's highest education year completed was the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.
14. As of the date of the administrative hearing, Claimant had no medical coverage.
15. Claimant alleged disability based on cardiac-related impairments.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

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). DHS (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 Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) and the Reference Tables Manual (RFT).

Prior to a substantive analysis, it should be noted that presented documents suggested that Claimant had an authorized hearing representative (AHR). The AHR did not appear for the hearing. Presumably, the AHR withdrew representation from the hearing, though no withdrawal documentation was submitted. Claimant stated that he wanted to proceed with the hearing without representation.

It should also be noted that the hearing request noted that special arrangements were required for Claimant to participate in the administrative hearing; specifically, an in-person hearing was requested. The request was granted.

MA provides medical assistance to individuals and families who meet financial and nonfinancial eligibility factors. The goal of the MA program is to ensure that essential health care services are made available to those who otherwise would not have financial resources to purchase them.

The Medicaid program is comprised of several sub-programs which fall under one of two categories; one category is FIP-related and the second category is SSI-related. BEM 105 at 1. To receive MA under an SSI-related category, the person must be aged (65 or older), blind, disabled, entitled to Medicare or formerly blind or disabled. *Id.* Families with dependent children, caretaker relatives of dependent children, persons under age 21 and pregnant, or recently pregnant, women receive MA under FIP-related categories. *Id.* AMP is an MA program available to persons not eligible for Medicaid through the SSI-related or FIP-related categories though DHS does always offer the program to applicants. It was not disputed that Claimant's only potential category for Medicaid eligibility would be as a disabled individual.

Disability for purposes of MA benefits is established if one of the following circumstances applies (see BEM 260 at 1-2):

- by death (for the month of death);
- the applicant receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits;
- SSI benefits were recently terminated due to financial factors;
- the applicant receives Retirement Survivors and Disability Insurance (RSDI) on the basis of being disabled; or
- RSDI eligibility is established following denial of the MA benefit application (under certain circumstances).

There was no evidence that any of the above circumstances apply to Claimant. Accordingly, Claimant may not be considered for Medicaid eligibility without undergoing a medical review process which determines whether Claimant is a disabled individual. *Id.* at 2.

Generally, state agencies such as DHS must use the same definition of SSI disability as found in the federal regulations. 42 CFR 435.540(a). Disability is federally defined as the inability to do any substantial gainful activity (SGA) 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 functionally identical definition of disability is found under DHS regulations. BEM 260 at 8.

Substantial gainful activity means a person does the following:

- Performs significant duties, and
- Does them for a reasonable length of time, and

- Does a job normally done for pay or profit. *Id.* at 9.

Significant duties are duties used to do a job or run a business. *Id.* They must also have a degree of economic value. *Id.* The ability to run a household or take care of oneself does not, on its own, constitute substantial gainful activity. *Id.*

The person claiming a physical or mental disability has the burden to establish a disability 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).

Federal regulations describe a sequential five step process that is to be followed in determining whether a person is disabled. 20 CFR 416.920. If there is no finding of disability or lack of disability at each step, the process moves to the next step. 20 CFR 416.920 (a)(4).

The first step in the process considers a person's current work activity. 20 CFR 416.920 (a)(4)(i). A person who is earning more than a certain monthly amount is ordinarily considered to be engaging in SGA. The monthly amount depends on whether a person is statutorily blind or not. The 2012 income limit is \$1010/month.

In the present case, Claimant denied having any employment since the date of the MA application; no evidence was submitted to contradict Claimant's testimony. Without ongoing employment, it can only be concluded that Claimant is not performing SGA. It is found that Claimant is not performing SGA; accordingly, the disability analysis may proceed to step two.

Claimant denied having any employment since the date of the MA application; no evidence was submitted to contradict Claimant's testimony. Without ongoing employment, it can only be concluded that Claimant is not performing SGA. It is found that Claimant is not performing SGA; accordingly, the disability analysis may proceed to step two.

The second step in the disability evaluation is to determine whether a severe medically determinable physical or mental impairment exists to meet the 12 month duration requirement. 20 CFR 416.920 (a)(4)(ii). The impairments may be combined to meet the severity requirement. If a severe impairment is not found, then a person is deemed not disabled. *Id.*

The impairments must significantly limit a person's basic work activities. 20 CFR 416.920 (a)(5)(c). "Basic work activities" refers to the abilities and aptitudes necessary to do most jobs. *Id.* Examples of basic work activities include:

- physical functions (e.g. walking, standing, sitting, lifting, pushing, pulling, reaching, carrying, or handling)
- capacities for seeing, hearing, and speaking, understanding; carrying out, and remembering simple instructions
- use of judgment
- responding appropriately to supervision, co-workers and usual work situations; and/or
- dealing with changes in a routine work setting.

Generally, federal courts have imposed a de minimus standard upon claimants to establish the existence of a severe impairment. *Grogan v. Barnhart*, 399 F.3d 1257, 1263 (10<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2005); *Hinkle v. Apfel*, 132 F.3d 1349, 1352 (10<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1997). *Higgs v Bowen*, 880 F.2d 860, 862 (6<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1988). Similarly, Social Security Ruling 85-28 has been interpreted so that a claim may be denied at step two for lack of a severe impairment only when the medical evidence establishes a slight abnormality or combination of slight abnormalities that would have no more than a minimal effect on an individual's ability to work even if the individual's age, education, or work experience were specifically considered. *Barrientos v. Secretary of Health and Human Servs.*, 820 F.2d 1, 2 (1<sup>st</sup> Cir. 1987). Social Security Ruling 85-28 has been clarified so that the step two severity requirement is intended "to do no more than screen out groundless claims." *McDonald v. Secretary of Health and Human Servs.*, 795 F.2d 1118, 1124 (1<sup>st</sup> Cir. 1986).

SSA specifically notes that age, education, and work experience are not considered at the second step of the disability analysis. 20 CFR 416.920 (5)(c). In determining whether Claimant's impairments amount to a severe impairment, all other relevant evidence may be considered. The analysis will begin with the relevant submitted medical documentation.

Hospital documents (Exhibits 12-30; A5-A9, A12-A22; A48-67) from an admission dated [REDACTED] were presented. It was noted that Claimant presented with year-long chest pain and an exacerbated symptom of dizziness starting the morning of admission. It was noted that Claimant was a one pack per day smoker. It was noted that radiology revealed no pulmonary embolism. It was noted that Claimant's ejection fraction (EF) was 35%-40%. It was noted that Claimant did remarkably well post-cardiac catheterization. It was noted that Claimant's cholesterol and blood pressure were high and treated with medication. A final impression was noted that Claimant did not have critical coronary artery disease though he had acute inferoapical infarction. It was noted that Claimant was discharged on [REDACTED] 2.

Hospital documents (Exhibits A23-A25) dated [REDACTED] were presented. It was noted that Claimant presented with complaints of chest pain. It was noted that Claimant was a pack per day smoker. An assessment was given that Claimant's chest pain was probably due to anxiety. An impression of unstable angina was also noted.

Hospital documents (Exhibits A26-A29) dated [REDACTED] were presented. It was noted that Claimant presented with symptoms of chest pain and shortness of breath. It was noted that Claimant's ejection fraction was 50%-55% as of 5/2012. It was noted that Claimant has not followed up on an outpatient basis. It was noted that Claimant's left ventricle function improved since a previous performed echocardiogram. All of Claimant's listed test results were noted as normal. It was also noted that Claimant was advised to quit smoking.

Hospital documents (Exhibits A30-A40) dated [REDACTED] were presented. It was noted that Claimant arrived by ambulance with complaints of chest pain. It was noted that Claimant's cardiac rate, rhythm and sounds were normal. It was noted that Claimant showed no edema. It was noted that Claimant was not in any pain upon discharge.


Hospital documents (Exhibits A38-A47) dated [REDACTED] were presented. It was noted that Claimant presented with chest pain- ongoing for four days. It was noted that Claimant's cardiac rate, rhythm and sounds were normal. It was noted that Claimant showed no edema. It was noted that instructions were given for anxiety.

Radiology reports and heart testing documents (Exhibits 48-67) were presented. The documents noted no abnormalities.

The presented medical records established that Claimant was hospitalized in 3/2012 for serious heart-related problems. Claimant's EF was concerningly low. The records also showed that Claimant was treated and responded "remarkably" well even before he was discharged. It was verified that four hospital encounters occurred after 3/2012, though none led to an admission. All presented testing after 3/2012 showed that Claimant's heart was relatively healthy. Though it was established that Claimant has cholesterol concerns, this is not deemed to be a significant impact on Claimant's ability to perform basic work activities. Even applying a de minimus standard, Claimant failed to establish having a severe impairment. Accordingly, it is found that Claimant is not disabled and that DHS properly denied Claimant's MA benefit application.

### **DECISION AND ORDER**

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, finds that DHS properly denied Claimant's MA benefit application dated 5/10/12 with retroactive benefits from 3/2012, based on a determination that Claimant is not disabled. The actions taken by DHS are AFFIRMED.

  
Christian Gardocki  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Maura Corrigan, Director  
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: 6/25/2013

Date Mailed: 6/25/2013

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

CG/hw

cc:

