

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 2013-19642
Issue No.: 2009; 4031
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: April 10, 2013
County: Jackson

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Vicki L. Armstrong

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 April 10, 2013, at the Jackson County DHS office. Claimant, represented by [REDACTED] of L&S Associates, personally appeared and testified. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included Eligibility Specialist [REDACTED] and Family Independence Specialist [REDACTED].

ISSUE

Did the Department of Human Services (DHS) properly deny Claimant's Medical Assistance (MA), Retro-MA and State Disability Assistance (SDA) application?

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 August 15, 2012, Claimant applied for MA, Retro-MA and SDA.
2. On October 5, 2012, the Medical Review Team (MRT) denied the programs.
3. On October 10, 2012, the DHS issued notice.
4. On December 27, 2012, Claimant filed a hearing request.
5. On February 13, 2013, the State Hearing Review Team (SHRT) denied Claimant's application.
6. Claimant had applied for Social Security Disability at the time of the hearing.

7. As of the date of hearing, Claimant was a 42-year-old standing 5'4" tall and weighing 167 pounds.
8. Claimant does not have an alcohol/drug abuse problem. She does smoke a pack of cigarettes a day.
9. Claimant has a valid driver's license but she does not drive because it is too hard to turn her neck.
10. Claimant has a high school equivalent education.
11. Claimant is not currently working. Claimant last worked in November, 2009.
12. Claimant alleges disability on the basis of a broken neck, cervical spondylosis, osteoarthritis, hernias, edema in her legs, anemia, headaches, fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis and depression.

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). 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 Bridges Reference Manual (RFT).

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 Mich Admin Code, Rules 400.3151-400.3180. Department policies are found in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) and the Reference Tables Manual (RFT).

Current legislative amendments to the Act delineate eligibility criteria as implemented by department policy set forth in program manuals. 2004 PA 344, Sec. 604, establishes the State Disability Assistance program. It reads in part:

Sec. 604 (1). The department shall operate a state disability assistance program. Except as provided in subsection (3), persons eligible for this program shall include needy citizens of the United States or aliens exempt from the Supplemental Security Income citizenship requirement who are at least 18 years of age or emancipated minors meeting one or more of the following requirements:

(b) A person with a physical or mental impairment which meets federal SSI disability standards, except that the minimum duration of the disability shall be 90 days. Substance abuse alone is not defined as a basis for eligibility.

Specifically, this Act provides minimal cash assistance to individuals with some type of severe, temporary disability which prevents him or her from engaging in substantial gainful work activity for at least ninety (90) days.

In order to receive MA benefits based upon disability or blindness, claimant must be disabled or blind as defined in Title XVI of the Social Security Act (20 CFR 416.901). DHS, being authorized to make such disability determinations, utilizes the SSI definition of disability when making medical decisions on MA applications. MA-P (disability), also is known as Medicaid, which is a program designated to help public assistance claimants pay their medical expenses. Michigan administers the federal Medicaid program. In assessing eligibility, Michigan utilizes the federal regulations.

Relevant federal guidelines provide in pertinent part:

"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 federal regulations require that several considerations be analyzed in sequential order:

. . . 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 regulations require that if disability can be ruled out at any step, analysis of the next step is not required. These steps are:

1. 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). If no, the analysis continues to Step 2.

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 416.909(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 that meets the duration requirement? If no, the analysis continues to Step 4. If yes, MA is approved. 20 CFR 416.920(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. Sections 200.00-204.00(f)?
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? This step considers the residual functional capacity, age, education, and past work experience to see if the client can do other work. If yes, the analysis ends and the client is ineligible for MA. If no, MA is approved. 20 CFR 416.920(g).

At application Claimant has the burden of proof pursuant to:

. . . 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).

Federal regulations are very specific regarding the type of medical evidence required by claimant to establish statutory disability. The regulations essentially require laboratory or clinical medical reports that corroborate claimant's claims or claimant's physicians' statements regarding disability. These regulations state in part:

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 sure, X-rays);

- (4) Diagnosis (statement of disease or injury based on its signs and symptoms). 20 CFR 416.913(b).

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). 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 a 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).

Applying the sequential analysis herein, Claimant is not ineligible at the first step as Claimant is not currently working. 20 CFR 416.920(b). The analysis continues.

The second step of the analysis looks at a two-fold assessment of duration and severity. 20 CFR 416.920(c). This second step is a *de minimus* standard. Ruling any ambiguities in Claimant's favor, this Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) finds that Claimant meets both. The analysis continues.

The third step of the analysis looks at whether an individual meets or equals one of the Listings of Impairments. 20 CFR 416.920(d). Claimant does not. The analysis continues.

The fourth step of the analysis looks at the ability of the applicant to return to past relevant work. This step examines the physical and mental demands of the work done by Claimant in the past. 20 CFR 416.920(f). In this case, this ALJ finds that Claimant cannot return to past relevant work on the basis of the medical evidence. The analysis continues.

The fifth and final step of the analysis applies the biographical data of the applicant to the Medical Vocational Grids to determine the residual functional capacity of the applicant to do other work. 20 CFR 416.920(g). After a careful review of the credible and substantial evidence on the whole record, this Administrative Law Judge finds that Claimant could not do a full range of sedentary work pursuant to Medical Vocational Grid Rule Footnote 201.00(h) due to multiple impairments and her chronic wide spread pain which is documented by the medical evidence.

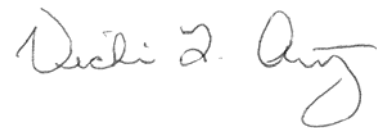
In this case, based on Claimant's fibromyalgia syndrome, her treating physician opined that Claimant is limited in comprehension, memory, sustained concentration, following simple directions, reading and writing. Physically, Claimant is limited to lifting less than 10 pounds, standing and walking less than 2 hours in an 8 hours day, and is unable to reach, push, pull or do fine manipulation with her hands and cannot use either foot or legs to operate foot controls. She also had a subxiphoid abdominal hernia that appears to contain likely colon measuring 3.5 x 4 cm and a larger hernia that likewise appears to contain bowel measuring 4 x 8 cm. Because Claimant's treating physician's opinion is well supported by medically acceptable clinical and laboratory diagnostic techniques, it has controlling weight. 20 CFR 404.1527(d)(2). This evidence, as already noted, does rise to statutory disability.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides the department erred in determining Claimant is not currently disabled for MA/Retro-MA and SDA eligibility purposes.

Accordingly, the department's decision is **REVERSED**, and it is ORDERED that:

1. The department shall process Claimant's August 15, 2012, MA/Retro-MA and SDA application, and shall award her all the benefits she may be entitled to receive, as long as she meets the remaining financial and non-financial eligibility factors.
2. The department shall review Claimant's medical condition for improvement in May, 2014, unless her Social Security Administration disability status is approved by that time.
3. The department shall obtain updated medical evidence from Claimant's treating physicians, physical therapists, pain clinic notes, etc. regarding her continued treatment, progress and prognosis at review.



Vicki L. Armstrong
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: May 1, 2013

Date Mailed: May 2, 2013

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 mailing 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

VLA/las

cc:

