

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

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 2013-8395  
Issue No.: 2009  
Case No.: [REDACTED]  
Hearing Date: February 28, 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 upon Claimant's request for a hearing. After due notice, an in-person hearing was held on February 28, 2013. Claimant, represented by [REDACTED] of [REDACTED], personally appeared and testified. Participants on behalf of Claimant included Assistant Payment Supervisor [REDACTED] and Eligibility Specialist [REDACTED].

**ISSUE**

Whether the Department of Human Services (the department) properly denied Claimant's application for the State Disability Assistance (SDA) program?

**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 June 14, 2012, Claimant filed an application for SDA benefits alleging disability.
- (2) On August 13, 2012, the Medical Review Team (MRT) denied Claimant's application for SDA.
- (3) On August 6, 2012, the department caseworker sent Claimant notice that his application was denied.
- (4) On October 29, 2012, Claimant filed a request for a hearing to contest the department's negative action.

- (5) On December 27, 2012, the State Hearing Review Team (SHRT) SDA was denied because the information in the file is inadequate to ascertain whether Claimant is or would be disabled for 90 days. (Depart Ex. B).
- (6) Claimant has a history of aortic root dilation, aortic aneurysm, Marfan syndrome, mitral valve prolapse, history of myocardial infarction, hypertension, deep venous thrombosis, migraines, pulmonary nodules, acute pancreatitis, tachycardia, neuropathy, tobacco abuse, blindness in his left eye, histoplasmosis, and obstructive sleep apnea.
- (7) On March 10, 2012, Claimant presented to the emergency department with severe abdominal pain. His lipase was slightly elevated. He started having abdominal pain in the epigastric region. He noticed chest pain over the left precordial region, radiating to the left side of his neck and also to the shoulder, associated with a tingling and numbness of the left upper extremity. He has a history of a descending aorta aneurysm around 3 cm in size. He had a CT angiogram of the chest and abdomen which did not show any dissection or aneurysm. He appeared to be in moderate pain and was admitted for observation and started on chest pain pathway. Claimant was discharged on March 15, 2012 and instructed to follow up with his primary care physician. (Depart Ex. A, pp 60-64).
- (8) On April 17, 2012, Claimant was admitted to the hospital with a complaint of chest and abdominal pain. His lipase at admission was 45. Troponin was less than 0.01. EKG showed normal sinus rhythm, no acute ST changes. Chest x-ray showed a possibility of a slightly lobulated left hilar mass. The CT angiogram showed a dilated aortic root measuring 4.8 x 4.7 cm, a partially calcified left hilar and a subcarinal mass. Claimant was admitted for chest pain and started on a beta-blocker for tachycardia. The echocardiogram showed a normal left ventricular size and systolic and diastolic function, trivial MR, trace MR, no pulmonary hypertension, and moderate aortic root dilation. He also had a stress test which showed no definite evidence of ischemia or infarct, and a slightly prominent left ventricle, global hypokinesia, with left ventricular ejection fraction of 45%. Claimant was discharged on April 22, 2012 with instructions to follow up in the Cardiot horacic Clinic at University of Michigan and with the Marfan Clinic associated with the University of Michigan. (Depart Ex. A, pp 42-47).
- (9) On May 18, 2012, Claimant's treating physician completed a Medical-Source Statement of Ability to do Work-Related Activities (Physical). The physician restricted Claimant to lifting less than 10 pounds, standing/walking to less than 2 hours in an 8-hour workday, and sitting less than 6 hours in an 8-hour workday. In addition, Claimant is never to climb ramps, stairs, ladders, ropes, or scaffolding and cannot balance, kneel, crouch, or crawl. The physician opined that Claimant has Marfan's

syndrome which has resulted in numerous orthopedic impairments including painful ligamentous instability of most major joints in all four extremities and his back and due to the above listed impairments, it would be dangerous and/or intolerably painful for Claimant to carry out these activities. (Depart Ex. A, pp 67-69).

- (10) At the time of the hearing, Claimant was 29 years old with an [REDACTED] birth date; was 7'4" in height and weighed 330 pounds.
- (11) Claimant has a high school equivalent education. His work history includes working in construction and maintenance.
- (12) Claimant was appealing the denial of Social Security disability benefits at the time of the hearing.

### **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 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.

The Medical Assistance (MA) program is established by the 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 (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).

Under the Medicaid (MA) program:

"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.

When determining disability, the federal regulations require several factors to be considered, including: (1) the location/duration/frequency/intensity of an applicant's pain; (2) the type/dosage/effectiveness/side effects of any medication the applicant takes to relieve pain; (3) any treatment other than pain medication that the applicant has received to relieve pain; and (4) the effect of the applicant's pain on his or her ability to do basic work activities. 20 CFR 416.929(c)(3). The applicant's pain must be assessed to determine the extent of his or her functional limitations in light of the objective medical evidence presented. 20 CFR 416.929(c)(94).

In determining whether you are disabled, we will consider all of your symptoms, including pain, and the extent to which your symptoms can reasonably be accepted as consistent with objective medical evidence, and other evidence. 20 CFR 416.929(a).

Pain or other symptoms may cause a limitation of function beyond that which can be determined on the basis of the anatomical, physiological or psychological abnormalities considered alone. 20 CFR 416.945(e).

In evaluating the intensity and persistence of your symptoms, including pain, we will consider all of the available evidence, including your medical history, the medical signs and laboratory findings and statements about how your symptoms affect you. We will then determine the extent to which your alleged functional limitations or restrictions due to pain or other symptoms can reasonably be accepted as consistent with the medical signs and

laboratory findings and other evidence to decide how your symptoms affect your ability to work. 20 CFR 416.929(a).

Since symptoms sometimes suggest a greater severity of impairment than can be shown by objective medical evidence alone, we will carefully consider any other information you may submit about your symptoms. 20 CFR 416.929(c)(3).

Because symptoms such as pain, are subjective and difficult to quantify, any symptom-related functional limitations and restrictions which you, your treating or examining physician or psychologist, or other persons report, which can reasonably be accepted as consistent with the objective medical evidence and other evidence, will be taken into account in reaching a conclusion as to whether you are disabled. 20 CFR 416.929(c)(3).

We will consider all of the evidence presented, including information about your prior work record, your statements about your symptoms, evidence submitted by your treating, examining or consulting physician or psychologist, and observations by our employees and other persons. 20 CFR 416.929(c)(3).

Your symptoms, including pain, will be determined to diminish your capacity for basic work activities to the extent that your alleged functional limitations and restrictions due to symptoms, such as pain, can reasonably be accepted as consistent with the objective medical evidence and other evidence. 20 CFR 416.929(c)(4).

In Claimant's case, the ongoing chest and abdominal pain and other non-exertional symptoms he describes are consistent with the objective medical evidence presented. Consequently, great weight and credibility must be given to his testimony in this regard.

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).

Claimant has not been employed since 2011; consequently, the analysis must move to Step 2.

In this case, Claimant has presented the required medical data and evidence necessary to support a finding that Claimant has significant physical limitations upon his ability to perform basic work activities.

Medical evidence has clearly established that Claimant has an impairment (or combination of impairments) that has more than a minimal effect on Claimant's work activities. See Social Security Rulings 85-28, 88-13, and 82-63.

In the third step of the sequential consideration of a disability claim, the trier of fact must determine if the claimant's impairment (or combination of impairments) is listed in Appendix 1 of Subpart P of 20 CFR, Part 404. This Administrative Law Judge finds that the Claimant's medical record will not support a finding that Claimant's impairment(s) is a "listed impairment" or equal to a listed impairment. See Appendix 1 of Subpart P of 20 CFR, Part 404, Part A. Accordingly, Claimant cannot be found to be disabled based upon medical evidence alone. 20 CFR 416.920(d).

In the fourth step of the sequential consideration of a disability claim, the trier of fact must determine if the claimant's impairment (s) prevents claimant from doing past relevant work. 20 CFR 416.920(e). It is the finding of this Administrative Law Judge, based upon the medical evidence and objective physical findings, that Claimant cannot return to his past relevant work because the rigors of working in construction and maintenance are completely outside the scope of his physical abilities given the medical evidence presented.

In the fifth step of the sequential consideration of a disability claim, the trier of fact must determine if the claimant's impairment(s) prevents claimant from doing other work. 20 CFR 416.920(f). This determination is based upon the claimant's:

- (1) residual functional capacity defined simply as "what can you still do despite your limitations?" 20 CFR 416.945;
- (2) age, education, and work experience, 20 CFR 416.963-.965; and
- (3) the kinds of work which exist in significant numbers in the national economy which the claimant could perform despite his/her limitations. 20 CFR 416.966.

See *Felton v DSS* 161 Mich. App 690, 696 (1987). Once claimant reaches Step 5 in the sequential review process, claimant has already established a *prima facie* case of disability. *Richardson v Secretary of Health and Human Services*, 735 F2d 962 (6<sup>th</sup> Cir, 1984). At that point, the burden of proof is on the state to prove by substantial evidence that the claimant has the residual functional capacity for substantial gainful activity.

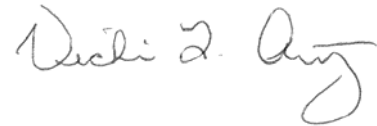
After careful review of Claimant's extensive medical record and the Administrative Law Judge's personal interaction with Claimant at the hearing, this Administrative Law Judge finds that Claimant's exertional and non-exertional impairments render Claimant unable to engage in a full range of even sedentary work activities on a regular and continuing basis. 20 CFR 404, Subpart P. Appendix 11, Section 201.00(h). See Social Security Ruling 83-10; *Wilson v Heckler*, 743 F2d 216 (1986). The department has failed to provide vocational evidence which establishes that Claimant has the residual functional capacity for substantial gainful activity and that, given Claimant's age, education, and work experience, there are significant numbers of jobs in the national economy which the Claimant could perform despite Claimant's limitations. Accordingly, the Administrative Law Judge concludes that Claimant is disabled for purposes of the MA/SDA program. Consequently, the department's denial of his June 14, 2012 MA/Retro-MA and SDA application cannot be upheld.

### **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 June 14, 2012 MA/Retro-MA and SDA application, and shall award him all the benefits he may be entitled to receive, as long as he meets the remaining financial and non-financial eligibility factors.
2. The department shall review Claimant's medical condition for improvement in March, 2014, unless his 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 his continued treatment, progress and prognosis at review.



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

Date Signed: March 18, 2013

Date Mailed: March 19, 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 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,



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- 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:

