

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No: 20139146
Issue No: 2009; 4031
Case No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: February 21, 2013
Ionia 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 Thursday; February 21, 2013. Claimant appeared and provided testimony on her behalf with Charles Cerling. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included [REDACTED]

The record was extended 90 days for a SHRT review of Claimant Exhibit 1.

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. Claimant's MA-P/SDA application August 20, 2012 was denied on October 9, 2012 per BEM 260/261, with a hearing request on November 2, 2012.
2. Vocational factors: Age [REDACTED] with an 8th grade education, and past 15 years of work experience as an unskilled custodial maintenance worker, factory machine operator, and skilled prison correction officer.
3. Claimant was last employed in August, 2012.
4. Claimant alleges disability due to high blood pressure, heart disease, depression, anxiety, panic attacks, and obsessive compulsive disorder. (DHS Exhibit A, Pg. 123).

5. Claimant's disabling symptoms are stress, depression, intermittent poor memory, perfectionist, chronic chest pain, leg cramps, and body weakness.
6. Medical reports of exams state the claimant on:
 - a. August 13, 2012: Has a cardiac size within normal limits; that thoracic aorta is *slightly* tortuous; that pulmonary vasculature is within *normal* limits. (DHS Exhibit A, Pg. 91).
 - b. August 13, 2012: Is alert and oriented times three, and in no apparent distress; that she has a regular heart rate and rhythm without murmurs; that musculoskeletally she has no muscle atrophy, weakness, decreased range of motion, instability, swelling, or tenderness; that her cranial nerves II-XI are grossly *intact*; that strength is a positive 5/5 in upper and lower extremities; that reflexes are positive 2/2 in biceps, triceps, patella, and Achilles' tendons bilaterally. (DHS Exhibit A, Pg. 97).
 - c. August 13, 2012: Has *mild* left ventricular hypertrophy; that she has *mild* mitral and tricuspid valve insufficiency. (DHS Exhibit A, Pg. 86).
 - d. August 13, 2012: Denies any chest pain or shortness of breath; and that she does have arthritis. (DHS Exhibit A, Pg. 93).
 - e. September 17, 2012: Has a GAF score of 50. (DHS Exhibit A, Pg. 52).
 - f. September 25, 2012: Is oriented as to time, place, and person. (DHS Exhibit A, Pg. 20).
 - g. October 10, 2012: Has a medical statement that she should be considered disabled. (Claimant Exhibit 1, Pg. 2).
7. State Hearing Review Team decision dated January 4, 2013 states the Claimant's impairments do not meet/equal a Social Security listing for the required duration. (DHS Exhibit A, Pg. 123).

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 Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) and the Bridges Reference Manual (BRM).

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 (BRM).

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.

...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.

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).

The claimant had the burden of proof to establish disability in accordance with steps 1-4 above... 20CFR 416.912 (a). The burden of proof shifts to the DHS at Step 5... 20CFR 416.960 (c)(2).

[In reviewing your impairment]...We need reports about your impairments from acceptable medical sources.... 20 CFR 416.913(a).

Acceptable medical verification sources are licensed physicians, osteopaths, or certified psychologists ...20CFR 416.913(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).

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).

Step 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).

The evidence of record established that the claimant has not engaged in substantial gainful activity since August 17, 2012. Therefore, the sequential evaluation is required to continue to the next step.

Step 2

... [The record must show a severe impairment] which significantly limits your physical or mental ability to do basic work activities.... 20 CFR 416.920(c).

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).

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).

...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).

The medical reports of record are mostly examination, diagnostic, treatment and progress reports. They do not provide medical assessments of Claimant's basic work limitations for the required duration. Stated differently, the medical reports do not establish whether the Claimant is impaired slightly, mildly, moderately (non-severe impairment, as defined above) or severely, as defined above.

The claimant's disabling symptoms (Findings of Fact #5) are inconsistent with the objective medical evidence of record (Findings of Fact #6).

...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).

...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).

In September, 2012 the Claimant had a GAF score of 50. This is considered a severe mental impairment with occupational-functioning. DSM IV (4th edition- revised).

The medical evidence of record does not establish the Claimant's abnormal mental findings have persisted on a regular and continuing basis on repeated examinations for a reasonable presumption to be made that a severe impairment has lasted or will continue to last for at least one continuous year. The medical evidence of record in August and September show that mentally the Claimant was oriented times three. At the hearing she had no difficulty understanding, remembering, and answering questions.

Claimant claims the medical conclusion in October, 2012 that she should be considered disabled in accordance with disability definition above should decide her disability.

...A statement by a medical source that you are "disabled" or "unable to work" does not mean that we will determine that you are disabled. 20 CFR 416.927(e).

The Claimant claims she is disabled under the medical-vocational guidelines for an individual of advanced age with an 8th grade education and unskilled/skilled previous sedentary/light work experience.

Administrative law judges have no authority to make decisions on constitutional grounds, overrule statutes, overrule promulgated regulations or overrule or make exceptions to the department policy set out in the program manuals. Delegation of Hearing Authority, July 13, 2011, per PA 1939, Section 9, Act 280.

In this case the DHS policy requires this ALJ to stop the sequential evaluation at Step 2 and not reach Steps 3, 4, and 5. Therefore, the sequential evaluation is required to stop at Step 2.

The department's Bridges 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.

Therefore, medical disability has not been established at Step 2 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 disability was not medically established.

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

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

Date Signed: May 10, 2013

Date Mailed: May 13, 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.

WAS/hj

cc:

