

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

**IN THE MATTER OF:**



Reg. No.: 2013-29099  
Issue No.: 2009  
Case No.: [REDACTED]  
Hearing Date: May 16, 2013  
County: Jackson

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:** Landis Y. Lain

**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, a telephone hearing was held on May 16, 2013. Claimant personally appeared and testified. Claimant was represented at the hearing by [REDACTED] of [REDACTED]. The department was represented by Assistant Payment Supervisor [REDACTED] and Eligibility Specialist [REDACTED].

**ISSUE**

Did the Department of Human Services (the department) properly deny claimant's application for Medical Assistance (MA-P)?

**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 October 11, 2012, claimant filed an application for Medical Assistance and Retroactive Medical Assistance benefits alleging disability.
2. On November 9, 2012, the Medical Review Team denied claimant's application stating that claimant's impairments were non-severe.
3. On November 14, 2012, the department caseworker sent claimant notice that his application was denied.
4. On February 8, 2013, claimant filed a request for a hearing to contest the department's negative action.

5. On April 9, 2013, the State Hearing Review Team again denied claimant's application stating that claimant in its analysis and recommendation: claimant was admitted in July, 2012 to rule out a myocardial infarction. Myocardial infarction was ruled out. His blood pressure was not controlled. He had musculoskeletal neck pain, hypertension and aortic stenosis. In February, 2013 his blood pressure was not well controlled but there was no evidence of heart failure. He had limited motion of the cervical spine and hip. There were no neurological deficits in the upper extremities. Motor strength was 5/5 in the upper and lower extremities. He used a cane because he did not want to fall. The claimant was obese with a BMI of 37. He had deconditioning noted. He was very anxious but his speech was normal and his affect and mood were congruent. The claimant is not currently engaging in substantial gainful activity (SGA) based on the information that is available in file. The claimant's impairments do not meet/equal the intent or severity of a Social Security listing. The medical evidence of record indicates that the claimant retains the capacity to perform a wide range of simple, unskilled, medium work. A finding about the capacity for prior work has not been made. However, this information is not material because all potentially applicable medical-vocation guidelines would direct a finding of not disabled give the claimant's age, education and residual functional capacity (RFC). Therefore, based on the claimant's vocational profile (closely approaching advanced age of 53, 13 years of education and history of unskilled/semi-skilled work), MA-P is denied using Vocational Rule 203.21 as a guide. Retroactive MA-P was considered in this case and is also denied.
6. The hearing was held on May 16, 2013. At the hearing, claimant waived the time periods and requested to submit additional medical information.
7. Additional medical information was submitted and sent to the State Hearing Review Team on May 17, 2013.
8. On July 22, 2013, the State Hearing Review Team again denied claimant's application stating it its analysis and recommendation: the newly submitted evidence does not significantly or materially alter the previous recommended decision. Claimant is not engaging in substantial gainful activity at this time. Claimant's severe impairments do not meet or equal any listing. Despite the impairments, he retains the capacity to perform medium work. Therefore, based on the claimant's vocational profile (claimant approaching advance age, 13 years of education, and medium work history); MA-P is denied using Vocational Rule 203.21 as a guide. Retroactive MA-P benefits are denied at step 5 of the sequential evaluation; claimant retains the capacity to perform medium work.
9. Claimant is a [REDACTED]-year-old [REDACTED] whose birth date is [REDACTED]. Claimant is 6'1" tall and weighs 265 pounds. Claimant is a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and stated that he was in [REDACTED] when he was in school because of cleft palate and he had surgeries and he was slow.

Claimant has stated that he does not read well and he is very slow and he does have some basic math skills and can count money.

10. Claimant last worked in 2010 at [REDACTED]. Claimant has also worked as a custodian and as a truck driver for 22 years and also in truck maintenance.
11. Claimant alleges as disabling impairments: numbness and tingling in the extremities, incontinence, optical migraines, chronic sinus problems, and headaches every day, shortness of breath, shaking of the hands and legs, stabbing pain in the back and neck, trembling, cramps in the body, hypertension and depression.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

The regulations governing the hearing and appeal process for applicants and recipients of public assistance in Michigan are found in the Michigan Administrative Code, MAC R 400.901-400.951. An opportunity for a hearing shall be granted to an applicant who requests a hearing because his or her claim for assistance has been denied. MAC R 400.903(1). Clients have the right to contest a department decision affecting eligibility or benefit levels whenever it is believed that the decision is incorrect. The department will provide an administrative hearing to review the decision and determine the appropriateness of that decision. BAM 600.

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 Program Reference Manual (PRM).

Pursuant to Federal Rule 42 CFR 435.540, the Department of Human Services uses the federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) policy in determining eligibility for disability under the Medical Assistance program. Under SSI, disability is defined as:

...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

A set order is used to determine disability. Current work activity, severity of impairments, residual functional capacity, past work, age, or education and work experience is reviewed. If there is a finding that an individual is disabled or not disabled at any point in the review, there will be no further evaluation. 20 CFR 416.920.

If an individual is working and the work is substantial gainful activity, the individual is not disabled regardless of the medical condition, education and work experience. 20 CFR 416.920(c).

If the impairment or combination of impairments do not significantly limit physical or mental ability to do basic work activities, it is not a severe impairment(s) and disability does not exist. Age, education and work experience will not be considered. 20 CFR 416.920.

Statements about pain or other symptoms do not alone establish disability. There must be medical signs and laboratory findings which demonstrate a medical impairment... 20 CFR 416.929(a).

...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 blood pressure, X-rays);
- (4) Diagnosis (statement of disease or injury based on its signs and symptoms).... 20 CFR 416.913(b).

In determining disability under the law, the ability to work is measured. An individual's functional capacity for doing basic work activities is evaluated. If an individual has the ability to perform basic work activities without significant limitations, he or she is not considered disabled. 20 CFR 416.994(b)(1)(iv).

Basic work activities are 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).

Medical findings must allow a determination of (1) the nature and limiting effects of your impairment(s) for any period in question; (2) the probable duration of the impairment; and (3) the residual functional capacity to do work-related physical and mental activities. 20 CFR 416.913(d).

Medical evidence may contain medical opinions. Medical opinions are statements from physicians and psychologists or other acceptable medical sources that reflect judgments about the nature and severity of the impairment(s), including your symptoms, diagnosis and prognosis, what an individual can do despite impairment(s), and the physical or mental restrictions. 20 CFR 416.927(a)(2).

All of the evidence relevant to the claim, including medical opinions, is reviewed and findings are made. 20 CFR 416.927(c).

The Administrative Law Judge is responsible for making the determination or decision about whether the statutory definition of disability is met. The Administrative Law Judge reviews all medical findings and other evidence that support a medical source's statement of disability.... 20 CFR 416.927(e).

A statement by a medical source finding that an individual is "disabled" or "unable to work" does not mean that disability exists for the purposes of the program. 20 CFR 416.927(e).

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).

At Step 1, claimant is not engaged in substantial gainful activity and has not worked since 2010. Claimant is not disqualified from receiving disability at Step 1.

The subjective and objective medical evidence on the record indicates that claimant testified on the record that he lives with his daughter and son and that he is separated and has no children under 18 who live with him and no income. Claimant does not receive any benefits from the Department of Human Services. Claimant does have a driver's license and drives 10 miles to the doctor or DHS. Claimant testified that he does not cook and his children do it for him, doesn't grocery shop or clean the home or do any outside work. Claimant testified that he watches television 4 hours per day and uses Facebook 2 hours per day. Claimant testified that he can stand for 15 minutes at a time and that he can sit with no limits. Claimant can walk from the car to the building and he cannot squat, touch his toes, tie his shoes or bend at the waist but is able to shower and dress himself. Claimant testified that his hip and knees are arthritic and that his level of pain of on a scale of 1 to 10 without medication is a 10 and with medication is a 3. Claimant is right handed and he stated that he had some trembling and numbness in his left hand and his legs and feet are weak and shaky with arthritis and constant foot pain. Claimant testified that the heaviest weight he can carry is a gallon of milk and he doesn't smoke, drink or do any drugs and the typical day is he has trouble sleeping and so he gets up at night and gets up does Facebook for 2 hours and watches television and visit with kids.

Claimant was seen July 30, 2012 with left sided neck pain. An evaluation by his doctor revealed a simple abnormal [REDACTED] and he was referred to the hospital for further evaluation. His blood pressure was 209/102. Myocardial infarction was ruled out. Discharge diagnoses included musculoskeletal neck pain, hypertension and aortic stenosis (p. 42-43). An examination dated February 15, 2013 showed the claimant was 6' 1/4" and 274 pounds with a BMI of 37. His blood pressure was 164/100. He had limitation of range of motion of the cervical spine. There were no neurological deficits in the upper extremities. He had some limitation of hip motion. X-ray of the lumbar spine showed only L5-S1 disc space reduction with no evidence of arthritis. Motor strength was 5/5 in the upper and lower extremities. Reflexes were symmetrical, 1+ at the knees and absent at the ankles. He was morbidly obese and had a significant element of deconditioning noted. He brought a can with him but and stated he used it only because he did not want to fall. His blood pressure was elevated but there was no

evidence of heart failure on examination. He was noted to be very anxious. His speech was normal. His affect and mood were congruent (records from DDS).

At Step 2, claimant has the burden of proof of establishing that he has a severely restrictive physical or mental impairment that has lasted or is expected to last for the duration of at least 12 months. There is insufficient objective clinical medical evidence in the record that claimant suffers a severely restrictive physical or mental impairment. Claimant has reports of pain in multiple areas of his body; however, there are no corresponding clinical findings that support the reports of symptoms and limitations made by the claimant. There are no laboratory or x-ray findings listed in the file which support claimant's contention of disability. The clinical impression is that claimant is stable. There is no medical finding that claimant has any muscle atrophy or trauma, abnormality or injury that is consistent with a deteriorating condition. In short, claimant has restricted himself from tasks associated with occupational functioning based upon his reports of pain (symptoms) rather than medical findings. Reported symptoms are an insufficient basis upon which a finding that claimant has met the evidentiary burden of proof can be made. This Administrative Law Judge finds that the medical record is insufficient to establish that claimant has a severely restrictive physical impairment.

Claimant alleges the following disabling mental impairments: depression.

For mental disorders, severity is assessed in terms of the functional limitations imposed by the impairment. Functional limitations are assessed using the criteria in paragraph (B) of the listings for mental disorders (descriptions of restrictions of activities of daily living, social functioning; concentration, persistence, or pace; and ability to tolerate increased mental demands associated with competitive work).... 20 CFR, Part 404, Subpart P, App. 1, 12.00(C).

There is insufficient objective medical/psychiatric evidence in the record indicating claimant suffers severe mental limitations. There is a no mental residual functional capacity assessment in the record. There is insufficient evidence contained in the file of depression or a cognitive dysfunction that is so severe that it would prevent claimant from working at any job. Claimant was oriented to time, person and place during the hearing. Claimant was able to answer all of the questions at the hearing and was responsive to the questions. The evidentiary record is insufficient to find that claimant suffers a severely restrictive mental impairment. For these reasons, this Administrative Law Judge finds that claimant has failed to meet his burden of proof at Step 2. Claimant must be denied benefits at this step based upon his failure to meet the evidentiary burden.

If claimant had not been denied at Step 2, the analysis would proceed to Step 3 where the medical evidence of claimant's condition does not give rise to a finding that he would meet a statutory listing in the code of federal regulations.

If claimant had not already been denied at Step 2, this Administrative Law Judge would have to deny him again at Step 4 based upon his ability to perform his past relevant work. There is no evidence upon which this Administrative Law Judge could base a finding that claimant is unable to perform work in which he has engaged in, in the past.

Therefore, if claimant had not already been denied at Step 2, he would be denied again at Step 4.

The Administrative Law Judge will continue to proceed through the sequential evaluation process to determine whether or not claimant has the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in his prior jobs.

At Step 5, the burden of proof shifts to the department to establish that claimant does not have residual functional capacity.

The residual functional capacity is what an individual can do despite limitations. All impairments will be considered in addition to ability to meet certain demands of jobs in the national economy. Physical demands, mental demands, sensory requirements and other functions will be evaluated.... 20 CFR 416.945(a).

To determine the physical demands (exertional requirements) of work in the national economy, we classify jobs as sedentary, light, medium and heavy. These terms have the same meaning as they have in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, published by the Department of Labor... 20 CFR 416.967.

Sedentary work. Sedentary work involves lifting no more than 10 pounds at a time and occasionally lifting or carrying articles like docket files, ledgers, and small tools. Although a sedentary job is defined as one which involves sitting, a certain amount of walking and standing is often necessary in carrying out job duties. Jobs are sedentary if walking and standing are required occasionally and other sedentary criteria are met. 20 CFR 416.967(a).

Light work. Light work involves lifting no more than 20 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 10 pounds. Even though the weight lifted may be very little, a job is in this category when it requires a good deal of walking or standing, or when it involves sitting most of the time with some pushing and pulling of arm or leg controls.... 20 CFR 416.967(b).

Claimant has submitted insufficient objective medical evidence that he lacks the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in his prior employment or that he is physically unable to do light or sedentary tasks if demanded of him. Claimant's activities of daily living do not appear to be very limited and he should be able to perform light or sedentary work even with his impairments. Claimant has failed to provide the necessary objective medical evidence to establish that he has a severe impairment or combination of impairments which prevent him from performing any level of work for a period of 12 months. The claimant's testimony as to his limitations indicates that he should be able to perform light or sedentary work.

There is insufficient objective medical/psychiatric evidence contained in the file of depression or a cognitive dysfunction that is so severe that it would prevent claimant from working at any job. Claimant was able to answer all the questions at the hearing and was responsive to the questions. Claimant was oriented to time, person and place during the hearing. Claimant's complaints of pain, while profound and credible, are out



of proportion to the objective medical evidence contained in the file as it relates to claimant's ability to perform work. Therefore, this Administrative Law Judge finds that the objective medical evidence on the record does not establish that claimant has no residual functional capacity. Claimant is disqualified from receiving disability at Step 5 based upon the fact that he has not established by objective medical evidence that he cannot perform light or sedentary work even with his impairments. Under the Medical-Vocational guidelines, a person closely approaching advance age of 53, with a high school education and an unskilled work history who is limited to medium work is not considered disabled pursuant to Medical-Vocational Rule 203.21 and who is limited to light work is not considered disabled pursuant to Medical-Vocational Rule 202.11.

The Department has established by the necessary competent, material and substantial evidence on the record that it was acting in compliance with department policy when it determined that claimant was not eligible to receive Medical Assistance.

### **DECISION AND ORDER**

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the department has appropriately established on the record that it was acting in compliance with department policy when it denied claimant's application for Medical Assistance, retroactive Medical Assistance and State Disability Assistance benefits. The claimant should be able to perform a wide range of light or sedentary work even with his impairments. The department has established its case by a preponderance of the evidence.

Accordingly, the department's decision is **AFFIRMED**.

/s/  
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Landis Y. Lain  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director  
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: 8/7/13

Date Mailed: 8/7/13

**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,
  - 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

LYL/tb

cc:

