

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

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Reg. No.: 2013 14363
Issue No.: 2009
Case No.: ██████████
Hearing Date: February 28, 2013
County: Wayne (18)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Lynn M. Ferris

HEARING DECISION

Following Claimant's request for a hearing, this matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and 400.37; 42 CFR 431.200 to 431.250; and 45 CFR 205.10. After due notice, an in person hearing was held on February 28, 2013, from Inkster, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included the Claimant and ██████████, the Claimant's Authorized Hearing Representative, from ██████████. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included ██████████ Medical Contact Worker.

ISSUE

Whether the Department properly determined that Claimant is not "disabled" for purposes of the Medical Assistance (MA-P) 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 8, 2012, Claimant applied for MA-P and retro MA-P to March 2012.
2. On August 6, 2012, the Medical Review Team denied Claimant's request.
3. The Department issued a Notice of Case Action dated August 10, 2012 denying the Claimant's MA-P application. Exhibit 1
4. On October 31, 2012 Claimant submitted to the Department a timely hearing request.

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 are 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.

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 symptoms, diagnosis and prognosis, what an individual can do despite impairment(s), and the physical or mental restrictions. 20 CFR 416.927(a)(2).

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).

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, Appendix 1, 12.00(C).

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.

Pursuant to 20 CFR 416.920, a five-step sequential evaluation process is used to determine disability. An individual's current work activity, the severity of the impairment, the residual functional capacity, past work, age, education and work experience are evaluated. If an individual is found disabled or not disabled at any point, no further review is made.

The first step is to determine if an individual is working and if that work is "substantial gainful activity" (SGA). If the work is SGA, an individual is not considered disabled regardless of medical condition, age or other vocational factors. 20 CFR 416.920(b).

Secondly, the individual must have a medically determinable impairment that is “severe” or a combination of impairments that is “severe.” 20 CFR 404.1520(c). An impairment or combination of impairments is “severe” within the meaning of regulations if it significantly limits an individual’s ability to perform basic work activities. An impairment or combination of impairments is “not severe” when medical and other evidence establish only a slight abnormality or a combination of slight abnormalities that would have no more than a minimal effect on an individual’s ability to work. 20 CFR 404.1521; Social Security Rulings (SSRs) 85-28, 96-3p, and 96-4p. If the Claimant does not have a severe medically determinable impairment or combination of impairments, he/she is not disabled. If the Claimant has a severe impairment or combination of impairments, the analysis proceeds to the third step.

The third step in the process is to assess whether the impairment or combination of impairments meets a Social Security listing. If the impairment or combination of impairments meets or is the medically equivalent of a listed impairment as set forth in Appendix 1 and meets the durational requirements of 20 CFR 404.1509, the individual is considered disabled. If it does not, the analysis proceeds to the next step.

Before considering step four of the sequential evaluation process, the trier must determine the Claimant’s residual functional capacity. 20 CFR 404.1520(e). An individual’s residual functional capacity is his/her ability to do physical and mental work activities on a sustained basis despite limitations from his/her impairments. In making this finding, the trier must consider all of the Claimant’s impairments, including impairments that are not severe. 20 CFR 404.1520(e) and 404.1545; SSR 96-8p.

The fourth step of the process is whether the Claimant has the residual functional capacity to perform the requirements of his/her past relevant work. 20 CFR 404.1520(f). The term past relevant work means work performed (either as the Claimant actually performed it or as is it generally performed in the national economy) within the last 15 years or 15 years prior to the date that disability must be established. If the Claimant has the residual functional capacity to do his/her past relevant work, then the Claimant is not disabled. If the Claimant is unable to do any past relevant work or does not have any past relevant work, the analysis proceeds to the fifth step.

In the fifth step, an individual’s residual functional capacity is considered in determining whether disability exists. An individual’s age, education, work experience and skills are used to evaluate whether an individual has the residual functional capacity to perform work despite limitations. 20 CFR 416.920(e).

Here, Claimant has satisfied requirements as set forth in steps one, two and three of the sequential evaluation. The Claimant is not currently engaging in substantial gainful activity and is not employed; thus, is not disqualified at Step 1.

Claimant alleges physical impairments due to low back pain, arthritis, right knee pain, scoliosis, chronic anemia, seizures, and carpal tunnel syndrome.

The Claimant alleges mental disabling impairments including learning disability, mood disorder, COPD, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and personality disorder.

A summary of the medical evidence presented follows.

On [REDACTED] a consultative exam was conducted. The examiner noted that the Claimant appeared with a walker with a seat and had a very bad limping gait and was assisted by her home healthcare nurse. At the time of the exam it was noted that the Claimant had a difficult time getting up from her walker chair. The physical examination noted that the Claimant was unable to do any range of motion of lumbar spine, hips and knees because she cannot stand. Impression was hydrocephalus with a shunt from childhood, seizure disorder, grand mal type, chronic tension headaches and scoliosis with multiple joint pain, chronic lumbar disc disease with bilateral radiculopathy, COPD with bronchitis, carpal tunnel on the left side, restless leg syndrome by history and depression and anxiety by history.

A DHS 49 was also completed at the time of the consultative examination. The form indicates that the Claimant was deteriorating. The following limitations were imposed, no lifting of less than 10 pounds, Claimant could not stand or walk less than 2 hours in an 8 hour day. Assistive device, a walker, was noted as needed and seat for activities for daily living, to reduce pain and to assist Claimant from falling. The Claimant could not operate foot leg controls with either leg. Mental limitations were noted with regard to memory, sustained concentration, social interaction and following simple directions. The examiner concluded that the Claimant could not meet her needs in the home. Current abilities were sitting, dial telephone, button clothes, and writing. Claimant was evaluated as being unable to perform all remaining abilities based on the examiner's objective examination.

A consultative examination for Adult IQ testing was conducted on [REDACTED]. The Claimant's full scale IQ was 78 which renders the Claimant in the borderline range. The examiner also evaluated the Claimant's mental status which noted labile affect, her mood was downcast, apprehensive, anxious and depressed. A WAIS IV IQ test was administered. The diagnosis was major depressive disorder, recurrent with mixed emotional features, with borderline intellectual functioning, and a GAF score of 55. A Mental Residual Functional Capacity Examination was also completed and the examiner rated the Claimant not significantly limited in all categories noting moderately limited in ability to sustain ordinary routine without supervision and the ability to complete a normal workday and worksheet without interruptions from psychologically based symptoms and to perform with consistent pace without an unreasonable number and length of interruptions.

The Claimant was seen in the emergency room on [REDACTED] with complaints of low back pain and noted hematoma due to a fall with back contusion diagnosis. Three views of spine were taken noting minimal bony spurs, leftward scoliosis. Impression was degenerative changes.

The Claimant was admitted to the hospital for a three-day stay [REDACTED] due to iron deficiency anemia and nausea and vomiting. At the time of her admission the Claimant's gait was slow due to leg pain. The Claimant also presented with low back pain.

The Claimant was seen in at the hospital on [REDACTED] with complaints of weakness and low back pain. The Claimant was admitted for a several day stay.

The Claimant was seen in the emergency room on [REDACTED] with complaints of weakness and low back pain.

Claimant was seen in the emergency room on [REDACTED] with complaints of low back pain due to falling out of bed. The Claimant was discharged the same day. X-rays of the lumbar spine noted that degenerative changes are stable. She was discharged with no treatment.

After a review of the medical evidence it is determined that the Claimant has met the severity requirement and de minimis standard of Step 2 as the evidence demonstrates that she has a serious impairment.

Listings 1.04 Disorders of the Spine; 12.00, (12.04, Depression; 12.06 Anxiety and 12.05 Intellectual Disability) were reviewed in light of the Medical Evidence and it is determined that none of the listings were met. No other listings were reviewed in spite of Claimant's testimony regarding other physical impairments as no medical evidence was provided in support thereof.

The fourth step of the analysis to be considered is whether the Claimant has the ability to perform work previously performed by the Claimant within the past 15 years. The trier of fact must determine whether the impairment(s) presented prevent the Claimant from doing past relevant work. In the present case, Claimant's past employment was as a fast food worker standing on her feet all day and a short period as a cashier which she could not do, due to inability to master use of a computer. Both such positions required Claimant to stand most of the day. This Administrative Law Judge finds, based on the medical evidence and objective, physical, and psychological findings, and the evaluation by the SHRT that Claimant is capable of only sedentary work, it is determined that the Claimant is not capable of the physical or mental activities required to perform any such position and cannot perform past relevant work, and thus a Step 5 analysis is required 20 CFR 416.920(e).

In the final step of the analysis, the trier of fact must determine if the Claimant's impairment(s) prevent the 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 her limitations. 20 CFR 416.966.

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).

Medium work. Medium work involves lifting no more than 50 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 25 pounds. If someone can do medium work, we determine that he or she can also do sedentary and light work. 20 CFR 416.967(c).

Heavy work. Heavy work involves lifting no more than 100 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 50 pounds. If someone can do heavy work, we determine that he or she can also do medium, light, and sedentary work. 20 CFR 416.967(d).

In Step 5, an assessment of the individual's residual functional capacity and age, education, and work experience is considered to determine whether an adjustment to other work can be made. 20 CFR 416.920(4)(v). At the time of hearing, the Claimant

was ■ years of age and is one month from the age of ■ and thus, will be considered to be closely approaching advanced age for MA-P purposes. As the Claimant is so close to the next age category, the guidance in the SSA regulations provides the following:

When we make a finding about your ability to do other work under § 416.920(f)(1), we will use the age categories in paragraphs (c) through (e) of this section. We will use each of the age categories that applies to you during the period for which we must determine if you are disabled. We will not apply the age categories mechanically in a borderline situation. If you are within a few days to a few months of reaching an older age category, and using the older age category would result in a determination or decision that you are disabled, we will consider whether to use the older age category after evaluating the overall impact of all the factors of your case.

The Claimant has the equivalent of a 9th grade education (limited or less) with trouble reading and with math which she described as impaired. This testimony is also borne out by the IQ testing finding a global score of 78, borderline low. The Claimant's past work history places her at unskilled light work. Additionally, the Claimant has chronic back pain and walks with use of a walker. At the hearing Claimant's testimony was found credible that she could stand 10 minutes, sit 10 to 15 minutes, can walk only short distances, and can lift 5 pounds or less. These restrictions were confirmed by the consultative examination conducted in this case and fully referenced earlier which found the Claimant to be evaluated at less than sedentary. Lastly, the SHRT found Claimant capable of only sedentary work. Disability is found if an individual is unable to adjust to other work. *Id.* At this point in the analysis, the burden shifts from the Claimant to the Department to present proof that the Claimant has the residual capacity to substantial gainful employment. 20 CFR 416.960(2); *Richardson v Sec of Health and Human Services*, 735 F2d 962, 964 (CA 6, 1984).

While a vocational expert is not required, a finding supported by substantial evidence that the individual has the vocational qualifications to perform specific jobs is needed to meet the burden. *O'Banner v Sec of Health and Human Services*, 587 F2d 321, 323 (CA 6, 1978). Medical-Vocational guidelines found at 20 CFR Subpart P, Appendix II, may be used to satisfy the burden of proving that the individual can perform specific jobs in the national economy. *Heckler v Campbell*, 461 US 458, 467 (1983); *Kirk v Secretary*, 667 F2d 524, 529 (CA 6, 1981) *cert den* 461 US 957 (1983). Individuals approaching advanced age (age 50-54) may be significantly limited in vocational adaptability if they are restricted to sedentary work. 20 CFR 416.963(d).

After a review of the entire record, including the Claimant's testimony and medical evidence presented, it is determined that Claimant's impairments have a major effect on her ability to perform basic work activities. In light of the foregoing, it is found that the Claimant maintains the residual functional capacity for work activities on a regular and continuing basis to meet the physical and mental demands required to perform sedentary work as defined in 20 CFR 416.967(a). Based upon the foregoing review of the entire record using the Medical-Vocational Guidelines [20 CFR 404, Subpart P,

Appendix II] as a guide, specifically Rule 201.09, it is found that the Claimant is disabled for purposes of the MA-P program at Step 5.

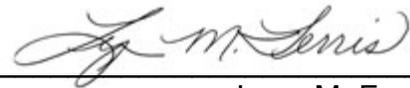
DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based on the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, if any, finds Claimant disabled not disabled for purposes of the MA-P and/or SDA benefit program.

Accordingly, the Department's determination is AFFIRMED REVERSED.

THE DEPARTMENT IS ORDERED TO INITIATE THE FOLLOWING, IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEPARTMENT POLICY AND CONSISTENT WITH THIS HEARING DECISION, WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THE DATE OF MAILING OF THIS DECISION AND ORDER:

1. The Department is ORDERED to initiate a review of the application dated June 8, 2012, and the Claimant's retro application (March 2012), if not done previously, to determine Claimant's non-medical eligibility.
2. A review of this case shall be set for November 2014.



Lynn M. Ferris
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: November 13, 2013

Date Mailed: November 13, 2013

NOTICE OF APPEAL: 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 or Reconsideration was made, within 30 days of the receipt date of the Decision and Order of Reconsideration or Rehearing Decision.

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).

A Request for Rehearing or Reconsideration may be granted when one of the following exists:

- Newly discovered evidence that existed at the time of the original hearing that could affect the outcome of the original hearing decision;

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- Misapplication of manual policy or law in the hearing decision which led to a wrong conclusion;
- Typographical, mathematical or other obvious error in the hearing decision that affects the rights of the client;
- Failure of the ALJ to address in the hearing decision relevant issues raised in the hearing request.

The Department, AHR or the Claimant must specify all reasons for the request. MAHS will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration. A request must be *received* in MAHS within 30 days of the date the hearing decision is mailed.

The written request must be faxed to (517) 335-6088 and be labeled as follows:

Attention: MAHS Rehearing/Reconsideration Request

If submitted by mail, the written request must be addressed as follows:

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

LMF/cl

cc:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]