

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No: 2013-49934
Issue No: 2009
Case No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: October 9, 2013
County DHS Macomb 12

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Landis Y. Lain

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, a telephone hearing was held on October 9, 2013, from Lansing, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included Claimant. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included [REDACTED], Eligibility Specialist.

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 March 2, 2013, Claimant filed an application for Medical Assistance and retroactive Medical Assistance benefits alleging disability.
2. On May 15, 2013, the Medical Review Team denied Claimant's application stating that Claimant could perform other work.
3. On May 22, 2013, the Department caseworker sent Claimant notice that her application was denied.
4. On May 24, 2013, Claimant filed a request for a hearing to contest the Department's negative action.

5. On August 1, 2013, the State Hearing Review Team again denied Claimant's application.
6. On October 9, 2013, the hearing was held. At the hearing, Claimant waived the time periods and requested to submit additional medical information.
7. On October 11, 2013, additional medical information was submitted and sent to the State Hearing Review Team.
8. On November 25, 2013, the State Hearing Review Team again denied Claimant's application.
9. Claimant is a [REDACTED]-year-old [REDACTED] whose birth date is [REDACTED]. Claimant is 5'5" tall and weighs 262 pounds. Claimant is a [REDACTED]. Claimant is able to read, write and does have basic math skills.
10. Claimant last worked in [REDACTED] as a [REDACTED]. Claimant also worked as a [REDACTED].
11. Claimant alleges as disabling impairments: arthritis, torn meniscus, breathing problems, knee problems, rectal polyps, hypertension, pneumothorax in 1984, depression, panic attacks, anxiety and focus problems.

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 [REDACTED]. 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 she lives with her [REDACTED] and she is [REDACTED]. She does have a [REDACTED] and drives three times per week. She cooks two times per week and cooks things like hamburger and eggs. Claimant grocery shops one time per month and needs help with lifting. She washes dishes and straightens the home. Claimant watches television 3 to 4 hours per day and uses the computer 30 minutes per day. Claimant testified that she can stand for 10 minutes and can sit 30 minutes to one hour at a time. Claimant stated that she can walk 5 to 10 feet. She cannot squat, tie her shoes or touch her toes. She could shower, dress herself and bend at the waist. Her level of pain on a scale from 1 to 10 without medication is a 10 and with medication is a 7. The heaviest weight she carries is a ½ gallon of milk and she has carpal tunnel syndrome in her hands and arms. She has pain in her legs and feet.

A [REDACTED] dated [REDACTED] indicates that the Claimant was in touch with reality and cooperative. Her affect was appropriate. Her mood was calm and pleasant. She was logical, goal directed and organized. She denied any psychotic symptoms, paranoia, hallucinations, suicidal or homicidal ideation. She struggled with some mild anxiety du jour pain and financial situation. She was oriented times three. The [REDACTED] indicates that Claimant is a [REDACTED]-year-old female with a history of symptoms consistent with [REDACTED] to chronic pain, [REDACTED]. She has never been evidencing major depression, anxiety or disturbance of thought and. Memory were concentration I would affect her ability to do work-related activities. Axis V GAF was 60 her prognosis was fair and she would be able to manage her own benefit funds. A [REDACTED] [REDACTED] indicates that Claimant has hypertension, osteoarthritis, hyperlipidemia, obesity, depression, anxiety and chondromalacia. She is 5 feet 5.5 inches tall and weighed 266

pounds. Her blood pressure was 160/100 she was right-hand dominant she could frequently carry less than 10 pounds and occasionally carry 25 pounds but never carry 50 pounds or more she could stand or walk at least two hours in an eight hour day and she could sit about six hours in an eight hour workday. She could use both of our of her extremities for simple grasping, reaching, pushing and pulling and fine manipulating. She could use both feet and legs for operating foot and leg controls. She was limited by her depression, anxiety and panic attacks needed a psychiatric evaluation. A [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of the left knee indicates that the impression was mild degenerative arthritis. A right knee [REDACTED] without contrast dated [REDACTED] indicates a tear in the posterior horn of the medial meniscus extending into the meniscal body with extrusion of the medial meniscal body. Intact lateral meniscus. And MCL sprain was suspected superimposed tear of the medial menisiofemoral ligament fibers. Cruciate ligaments and lateral collateral ligament or intact without evidence of terror sprain. Osteoarthritic changes with moderate to severe chondromalacia along the weight-bearing aspect of the medial tibialfemoral joint compartment. A small joint effusion. The medical evidence of record supports that the Claimant reasonably retains the capacity to perform light exertional tasks. The evidence does not support the presence of severe psychiatric limitations.

At Step 2, Claimant has the burden of proof of establishing that she 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 her 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 herself from tasks associated with occupational functioning based upon her 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.

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 **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 her burden of proof at Step 2. Claimant must be denied benefits at this step based upon her 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 her again at Step 4 based upon her ability to perform her 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 she has engaged in, in the past. Therefore, if Claimant had not already been denied at Step 2, she 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 her 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 she lacks the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in her prior employment or that she is physically unable to do light or sedentary tasks if demanded of her. Claimant's activities of daily living do not appear to be very limited and she should be able to perform light or sedentary work even with her impairments. Claimant has failed to provide the necessary objective medical evidence to establish that she has a severe impairment or combination of impairments which prevent her from performing any level of work for a period of 12 months. The Claimant's testimony as to her limitations indicates that she 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 she has not established by objective medical evidence that she cannot perform light or sedentary work even with her impairments. **Under the Medical-Vocational guidelines, a younger individual (age [REDACTED] with a [REDACTED] and an unskilled work history who is limited to light or sedentary work is not considered disabled.**

It should be noted that Claimant continues to smoke despite the fact that her doctor has told her to quit. Claimant is not in compliance with her treatment program.

If an individual fails to follow prescribed treatment which would be expected to restore their ability to engage in substantial activity without good cause there will not be a finding of disability.... 20 CFR 416.994(b)(4)(iv).

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 and/or retroactive 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 or retroactive Medical Assistance benefits. The Claimant should be able to perform a wide range of light or sedentary work even with her impairments. The Department has established its case by a preponderance of the evidence.

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

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

Date Signed: 12/18/13

Date Mailed: 12/20/13

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;
- 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

2013-49934/LYL

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

LYL/tb

cc:

