

**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.: 2013-52693
Issue No.: 4009
Case No.: ██████████
Hearing Date: November 19, 2013
County: Oakland-03

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Aaron McClintic

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 November 19, 2013, from Lansing, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included the Claimant. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included Allison Hylton.

ISSUE

Did the Department properly deny Claimant's State Disability Assistance application?

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Claimant applied for SDA on December 6, 2012.
2. The Medical Review Team denied the application on March 14, 2013.
3. Claimant filed a request for hearing June 4, 2013, regarding the SDA denial.
4. A telephone hearing was held on November 19, 2013.
5. On August 8, 2013, the State Hearing Review Team denied the application because the medical evidence of record indicates that the Claimant retains the capacity to perform a wide range of simple, unskilled, light work.
6. Claimant is 5' 7" tall and weighs 130 pounds.
7. Claimant is 51 years of age.
8. Claimant's impairments have been medically diagnosed as irritable bowel syndrome, right shoulder injury, neck and back pain, anxiety and depression.
9. Claimant has the following symptoms: pain, fatigue, muscle spasms, and insomnia

10. Claimant completed high school and training as an auto mechanic.
11. Claimant is able to read, write, and perform basic math skills.
12. Claimant is not working. Claimant last worked in March 2011, as an overnight stock person. Claimant previously worked as an asphalt worker.
13. Claimant lives alone.
14. Claimant testified that he cannot perform some household chores.
15. Claimant takes the following prescribed medications:
 - a. Vicodin
 - b. Valium
 - c. Wellbutrin
16. Claimant testified to the following physical limitations:
 - i. Sitting: 10 minutes
 - ii. Standing: 10 minutes
 - iii. Walking: 1 block
 - iv. Bend/stoop: difficulty
 - v. Lifting: 5-10 lbs.
 - vi. Grip/grasp: no limitations
17. Claimant testified to experiencing pain, at a high level of 8-9, on an everyday basis with some pain, always present, at a low level of 5.
18. In a psychological evaluation dated February 1, 2013, Claimant was found to have a GAF score of 51-60 with diagnoses of mood disorder and major depressive disorder.
19. In a consultative physical examination the physical examination stated the following: "MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM: The examination of the cervical, dorsal and lumbrosacral spines clinically did reveal status post discectomy. There was no paraspinal muscle tenderness or spasm. The motions of the lumbrosacral spine were as follows: Forward flexion 0-80 degrees, backward extension 0-10 degrees, lateral flexion 0-15 degrees, lateral rotation 0-15 degrees. Straight leg raise test was 70 degrees on the right and 70 degrees on the left. Examination of the upper and lower extremities did reveal cervical spine with forward flexion 0-40 degrees, backward extension 0-30 degrees, lateral flexion 0-30 degrees and rotation 0-80 degrees. Both shoulders had external rotation 0-45 degrees."

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 State Disability Assistance (SDA) program is established by the Social Welfare Act, MCL 400.1-.119b. The Department of Human Services (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers the SDA program pursuant to MCL 400.10 and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3151-.3180.

Pursuant to Federal Rule 42 CFR 435.540, the Department uses the Federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) policy in determining eligibility for disability under the MA-P 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.

Federal regulations require that the Department use the same operative definition for "disabled" as used for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) under Title XVI of the Social Security Act. 42 CFR 435.540(a).

"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.

In determining whether an individual is disabled, 20 CFR 416.920 requires the trier of fact to follow a sequential evaluation process by which current work activity, the severity of the impairment(s), residual functional capacity, and vocational factors (i.e., age, education, and work experience) are assessed in that order. When a determination that an individual is, or is not, disabled can be made at any step in the sequential evaluation, evaluation under a subsequent step is not necessary.

First, the trier of fact must determine if the individual is working and if the work is substantial gainful activity. 20 CFR 416.920(b). In this case, the Claimant is not working. Therefore, the Claimant is not disqualified at this step in the evaluation.

The second step to be determined in considering whether the Claimant is considered disabled is the severity of the impairment. In order to qualify the impairment must be considered severe, which is defined as an impairment which significantly limits an individual's physical, or mental, ability to perform basic work activities. Examples of these include:

1. Physical functions such as walking, standing, sitting, lifting, pushing, 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).

In this case, the Claimant's medical evidence of record supports a finding that Claimant has significant physical and mental limitations upon Claimant's ability to perform basic work activities such as walking, standing, sitting, lifting, pushing, pulling, reaching, carrying, or handling. Medical evidence has clearly established that the Claimant has an impairment (or combination of impairments) that has more than a minimal effect on the Claimant's work activities. See Social Security Rulings: 85-28, 88-13, and 82-63.

In the third step of the analysis, 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 does not support a finding that the 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. Listings 1.04 and 12.04 were considered.

The person claiming a physical, or mental, disability has the burden to establish it through the use of competent medical evidence from qualified medical sources such as clinical/laboratory findings, diagnosis/prescribed treatment, prognosis for a recovery and/or medical assessment of ability to do work-related activities or ability to reason and to make appropriate mental adjustments, if a mental disability is being alleged. 20 CFR 416.913. A conclusory statement by a physician, or mental health professional, that an individual is disabled, or blind, is not sufficient without supporting medical evidence, to establish disability. 20 CFR 416.927.

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, the Claimant's past employment was as a stock person. Working as a stock person, as described by Claimant at hearing, would be considered medium exertional work. The Claimant's impairments would prevent him from doing past relevant work. This Administrative Law Judge will continue through step 5.

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).

See *Felton v DSS* 161 Mich. App 690, 696 (1987). Once the Claimant makes it to the final step of the analysis, the Claimant has already established a prima facie case of

disability. *Richardson v Secretary of Health and Human Services*, 732 Fd2 962 (6th Cir, 1984). Moving forward the burden of proof rests with the state to prove by substantial evidence that the Claimant has the residual function capacity for substantial gainful activity.

After careful review of the medical evidence presented and Claimant's statements, and considering the Claimant in the most restrictive circumstances, this Administrative Law Judge finds that Claimant would be able to perform work, at least work, on the light exertional level.

This Administrative Law Judge finds that Claimant is capable of the requisite sitting, standing and walking for a light exertional job. The Claimant is approaching advanced age at age 51. 20 CFR 416.963. Claimant's previous work has been unskilled. Federal Rule 20 CFR 404, Subpart P, Appendix 2 contains specific profiles for determining disability based on residual functional capacity and vocational profiles. Under Table 1, Rule 202.13 the Claimant is not disabled for the purposes of SDA. Claimant's testimony regarding his limitations and ability to sit, stand, walk, lift and carry is not supported by substantial evidence. Claimant failed to present sufficient evidence that he has a psychological impairment that is substantially limiting.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that Claimant is NOT medically disabled for the purposes of SDA eligibility.

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



Aaron McClintic
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: 12/11/2013

Date Mailed: 12/12/2013

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;
- 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

AM/pw

cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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