

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 201318644
Issue No.: 2009
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: April 3, 2013
County: Mecosta

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Janice G. Spodarek

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 April 3, 2015. Participants on behalf of Claimant included [REDACTED]. Participants on behalf of Department of Human Services (DHS) included [REDACTED].

ISSUE

Did the Department of Human Services (DHS) properly deny Claimant's Medical Assistance (MA) application?

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 10/23/12, Claimant applied for MA with the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS).
2. Claimant did not apply for retro MA.
3. On 11/29/12, the MRT denied.
4. On 12/21/12, the DHS issued notice.
5. On 2/14/13, Claimant filed a hearing request.
6. On 2/8/13, the State Hearing Review Team (SHRT) denied Claimant.

7. Claimant has an SSI application pending with the Social Security Administration (SSA).
8. Claimant is a [REDACTED]-year-old [REDACTED] standing 5'5 and weighing 125 pounds.
9. Claimant does not have an alcohol/drug abuse problem or history. Just prior to Claimant's application, Claimant has a half a pack a day 28 years smoking history. Exhibit 24.
10. Claimant has a [REDACTED] and can [REDACTED] an [REDACTED]
11. Claimant has an [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] obtained [REDACTED] Claimant studied for three years. Claimant is an [REDACTED]
12. Claimant is not currently working. Claimant last worked in 2009 as an [REDACTED] at [REDACTED].
13. On the DHS-49B, Claimant claims the entire impairments/disability as: "Crohn's Disease." Claimant also has medical evidence to indicate aneurysm, vision issues, non-compliance with medication, wheezing and shortness of breath.
14. Claimant was hospitalized in 8/13/12 which consists of the bulk of the medical evidence due to severe headache, mild swelling of the right face with tingling and numbness. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] showed a large thrombosed right cavernous sinus aneurysm without evidence of intracranial hemorrhage. No surgical intervention was done and treated with medication. Exhibit 2-3. Physical exam reports lung clears. Abdomen was soft and nontender. Normal muscle strength throughout with intact sensation. Hospital treatment was medically treated.
15. Evidence indicates Claimant's Crohn's disease is stable.
16. Progress notes for Claimant's treating physician dated 8/13/12 indicates that Claimant saw an optometrist who found no ocular pathology. Recommend problems Claimant was experiencing are expected to "...general abate over 2 to 3 months." Exhibit 92.
17. On office/clinic note date 6/29/11 indicates that Claimant is positive for some wheezing and shortness of breath. Crohn's disease is stable. Exhibit 81.
18. Office/clinic note from 3/30/11 indicates physician's concerns with Xanax addiction and family issues. Physician indicates strongly believes that Claimant needs to get counseling, start an exercise program, and deal with issues that Claimant does not deal adequately with. Physician also notes

that the doctor has given Claimant a referral on a number of occasions but that Claimant "...has not followed up." Exhibit 80.

19. A consultation note dated 8/27/12 indicates that Claimant has been non-compliant with warfarin. Exhibit 17.
20. The DHS failed to submit activities of daily living sheet. Claimant testified that she does some cooking but that her activities of daily living vary day by day.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

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 Program Administrative Manual (PAM), the Program Eligibility Manual (PEM) and the Program Reference Manual (PRM).

In order to receive MA benefits based upon disability or blindness, Claimant must be disabled or blind as defined in Title XVI of the Social Security Act (20 CFR 416.901). DHS, being authorized to make such disability determinations, utilizes the SSI definition of disability when making medical decisions on MA applications. MA-P (disability), also is known as Medicaid, which is a program designated to help public assistance Claimants pay their medical expenses. Michigan administers the federal Medicaid program. In assessing eligibility, Michigan utilizes the federal regulations.

Relevant federal guidelines provide in pertinent part:

"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.

The federal regulations require that several considerations be analyzed in sequential order:

...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.

The regulations require that if disability can be ruled out at any step, analysis of the next step is not required. These steps are:

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). If no, the analysis continues to Step 2.
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 416.909(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 that meets the duration requirement? If no, the analysis continues to Step 4. If yes, MA is approved. 20 CFR 416.920(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. Sections 200.00-204.00(f)?
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? This step considers the residual functional capacity, age, education, and past work experience to see if the client can do other work. If yes, the analysis ends and the client is ineligible for MA. If no, MA is approved. 20 CFR 416.920(g).

At application Claimant has the burden of proof pursuant to:

...You must provide medical evidence showing that you have an impairment(s) and how severe it is during the time you say that you are disabled. 20 CFR 416.912(c).

Federal regulations are very specific regarding the type of medical evidence required by Claimant to establish statutory disability. The regulations essentially require laboratory or clinical medical reports that corroborate Claimant's claims or Claimant's physicians' statements regarding disability. These regulations state in part:

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

...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).

...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).

Medical findings consist of symptoms, signs, and laboratory findings:

- (a) **Symptoms** are your own description of your physical or mental impairment. Your statements alone are not enough to establish that there is a physical or mental impairment.
- (b) **Signs** are anatomical, physiological, or psychological abnormalities which can be observed, apart from your statements (symptoms). Signs must be shown by medically acceptable clinical diagnostic techniques. Psychiatric signs are medically demonstrable phenomena which indicate specific psychological abnormalities e.g., abnormalities of behavior, mood, thought, memory, orientation, development, or perception. They must also be shown by observable facts that can be medically described and evaluated.
- (c) **Laboratory findings** are anatomical, physiological, or psychological phenomena which can be shown by the use of a medically acceptable laboratory diagnostic techniques. Some of these diagnostic techniques include chemical tests, electrophysiological studies (electrocardiogram, electroencephalogram, etc.),

roentgenological studies (X-rays), and psychological tests. 20 CFR 416.928.

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).

Information from other sources may also help us to understand how your impairment(s) affects your ability to work. 20 CFR 416.913(e).

...You can only be found disabled if you are unable 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. See 20 CFR 416.905. Your impairment must result from anatomical, physiological, or psychological abnormalities which are demonstrable by medically acceptable clinical and laboratory diagnostic techniques.... 20 CFR 416.927(a)(1).

It is noted that Congress removed obesity from the Listing of Impairments shortly after the removal of drug addition and alcoholism. This removal reflects the view that there is a strong behavioral component to obesity. Thus, obesity in-and-of itself is not sufficient to show statutory disability.

Applying the sequential analysis herein, Claimant is not ineligible at the first step as Claimant is not currently working. 20 CFR 416.920(b). The analysis continues.

The second step of the analysis looks at a two-fold assessment of duration and severity. 20 CFR 416.920(c). This second step is a *de minimus* standard. Ruling any ambiguities in Claimant's favor, this Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) finds that Claimant meets both. The analysis continues.

The third step of the analysis looks at whether an individual meets or equals one of the Listings of Impairments. 20 CFR 416.920(d). Claimant does not. The analysis continues.

The fourth step of the analysis looks at the ability of the applicant to return to past relevant work. This step examines the physical and mental demands of the work done by Claimant in the past. 20 CFR 416.920(f).

In this case, this ALJ finds that Claimant cannot return to past relevant work on the basis of the medical evidence. The analysis continues.

The fifth and final step of the analysis applies the biographical data of the applicant to the Medical Vocational Grids to determine the residual functional capacity of the applicant to do other work. 20 CFR 416.920(g). After a careful review of the credible and substantial evidence on the whole record, this Administrative Law Judge concurs with the SHRT decision in finding Claimant not disabled pursuant to medical vocational grid rule 202.15 as guide.

In reaching this conclusion, it is noted that the bulk of Claimant's medical evidence deals with her admission in 8/12. There are some progress notes from her treating physician. Claimant indicated at the administrative hearing that she left and separated from her job in 2009. However, there is not sufficient medical evidence to support finding that Claimant is under or was under a disability in 2009 until 2012 when she was admitted to the hospital based upon the physician's note. With regards to her eye issues, that is expected to resolve in "2 to 3 months." Exhibit 92. Claimant did not apply for SDA. The eye issues does not meet duration.

With regards to Crohn's disease, all medical evidence - both based upon the 8/12 admission as well as the 2011 progress notes indicate that it is stable.

With regards to Claimant's past wheezing and shortness of breath, it appears it has resolved after Claimant stopped smoking.

With regards to other general issues having to do with some family addictions issues, chronic pain, and anxiety disorder, the physician indicates based upon a progress note of 4/6/11 that Claimant needs to engage in some significant life style changes. Exhibit 80.

As to Claimant's [REDACTED] while it may have been severe at the time, it was medically treated and no duration or significant severity is met as required under statutory disability and the issues and requirements found at 20 CFR 416.913.

Claimant has the burden of proof from Step 1 to Step 4. 20CFR 416.912(c). Federal and state law is quite specific with regards to the type of evidence sufficient to show statutory disability. 20 CFR 416.913. This authority requires sufficient medical evidence to substantiate and corroborate statutory disability as it is defined under federal and state law. 20 CFR 416.913(b), .913(d), and .913(e); BEM 260. These medical findings must be corroborated by medical tests, labs, and other corroborating medical evidence that substantiates disability. 20 CFR 416.927, .928. Moreover, complaints and symptoms of pain must be corroborated pursuant to 20 CFR 416.929(a), .929(c)(4), and .945(e). Claimant's medical evidence in this case, taken as a whole, simply does not rise to statutory disability by meeting these federal and state requirements. 20 CFR 416.920; BEM 260, 261.

The 6th Circuit has held that subjective complaints are inadequate to establish disability when the objective evidence fails to establish the existence of severity of the alleged pain. *McCormick v Secretary of Health and Human Services*, 861 F2d 998, 1003 (6th cir 1988).

For these reasons, for the reasons state above, statutory disability is not shown.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the department's actions were correct.

Accordingly, the department's determination in this matter is UPHELD.

/s/
Janice G. Spodarek
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: 5/24/13

Date Mailed: 5/24/13

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 mailing 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

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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

JGS/tb

cc:

