

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 201338790
Issue No.: 2009;4031
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: September 17, 2013
County: Huron County DHS

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 three way telephone hearing was held. Claimant personally appeared and testified. Claimant was represented by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] non-attorney. The DHS was represented by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] AAG.

ISSUE

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

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Administrative Law Judge, based up on the competent, material and substantial evidence on the whole record, finds as material fact:

1. On 2-25-13, Claimant applied for MA and SDA with the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS).
2. Claimant did not apply for retro MA.
3. On 3-29-13 MRT denied the MA; on 5-14-13 MRT denied Claimant's SDA application.
4. The DHS subsequently issued notice.
5. On 4-3-13 and 5-23-13, Claimant filed a hearing request.
6. On 6-12-13, the State Hearing Review Team (SHRT) denied Claimant. Pursuant to the Claimant's request to hold the record open for the

submission of new and additional medical documentation, on 12-4-13 SHRT once again denied Claimant.

7. Claimant has an SSI application pending with the Social Security Administration (SSA). Claimant has an Appeals Council case currently.
8. Claimant is a 52-year-old male, standing 5'8" tall and weighing 172 pounds.
9. Claimant does not have an alcohol/drug abuse problem or history. Claimant smokes. Claimant has a nicotine addiction.
10. Claimant has a driver's license and can drive an automobile. Claimant indicated that the questions on the driving exam were read to him.
11. Claimant has a limited education. Claimant was in special education classes.
12. Claimant is not currently working. Claimant's work history is unskilled/semi-skilled work. Claimant argued at the administrative hearing that his employment has made special accommodations for him.
13. Claimant alleges disability on the basis of Listing 12.05, heart problems, back problems, depression.
14. On 10-3-13 Claimant underwent a psychiatric/psychological evaluation indicating percentile ranks of 1%, 2%, 3%, 5%, 12% and 13% on the measured indices. Summary information indicates that the Claimant put forth a good effort but Claimant "...may appear better than his actual deficits ..." due to his higher scores in perceptual reasoning and working memory. The evaluation notes that the overall score is in the "extremely low range."
15. An 6-17-13 MRI of the lumbar spine shows multiple levels of disc pathology with stenosis at a number of levels.
16. Claimant goes to a pain clinic and has chronic back pain and right sided numbness. Claimant was a credible witness.

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).

The State Disability Assistance (SDA) program which provides financial assistance for disabled persons is established by 2004 PA 344. The Department of Human Services (DHS or department) administers the SDA program pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and MAC R 400.3151-400.3180. Department policies are found in the Program Administrative Manual (PAM), the Program Eligibility Manual (PEM) and the Program Reference Manual (PRM).

Statutory authority for the SDA program states in part:

- (b) A person with a physical or mental impairment which meets federal SSI disability standards, except that the minimum duration of the disability shall be 90 days. Substance abuse alone is not defined as a basis for eligibility.

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 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(1)?
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 addiction 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).

After a careful review of the substantial and credible evidence on the whole record, this ALJ finds that Claimant equals Listing 12.05.

In reaching this conclusion, it is noted that the recent psychological evaluation from June,

2013 indicates that the doctor notes that Claimant gave a good effort but the results indicate that Claimant "...may appear better than his actual deficits...". Moreover, this statement by the doctor is consistent with Claimant's testimony at the administrative hearing when Claimant gave very specific examples of work accommodations that helped to engage in substantial gainful activity. Claimant was a credible witness.

Additionally, Claimant has "other mental impairments" issues as anticipated by 12.05C in that the psychological evaluation indicates signs/symptoms of Tardive Dyskinesia.

Claimant has compounding physical problems, as evidenced by the June 2013 radiology report showing multiple levels of disc pathology with stenosis.

This ALJ wishes to note that the federal ALJ denial of Claimant, for which Claimant has made an appeal to the Appeals Council, relied in part on a mental status evaluation that is over two decades old, and, the federal ALJ's decision in March 2013 was made without the benefit of the MRI completed in June, 2013.

For these reasons, and for the reasons stated above, statutory disability is supported by the evidence.

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 incorrect.

Accordingly, the department's determination in this matter is hereby **REVERSED**.

The department is ORDERED to make a determination if Claimant meets the non-medical criteria for the MA and SDA programs. If so, the department is ORDERED to open an MA and SDA case as permitted by DHS policy, including any retro months if eligible, and issue supplemental benefits to Claimant.

The department is ORDERED to review this case in one year from the date of this Decision and Order.

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

Date Signed: December 10, 2013

Date Mailed: December 10, 2013

NOTICE: 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)

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 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 affect the substantial rights of the claimant,
 - 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

JGS/hj

cc:

