

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

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 2013-56139  
Issue No.: 2009  
Case No.: [REDACTED]  
Hearing Date: November 6, 2013  
County: Macomb-12

**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 MC L 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 November 6, 2013, from Lansing, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included the Claimant. Claimant's Attorney [REDACTED] also appeared. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included [REDACTED] Assistant Attorney General [REDACTED] also appeared for the Department.

**ISSUE**

Did the Department properly deny Claimant's Medical Assistance application?

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Claimant applied for MA-P on February 18, 2013.
2. The Medical Review Team denied the application on May 1, 2013.
3. Claimant filed a request for hearing July 3, 2013, regarding the MA denial.
4. A telephone hearing was held on November 6, 2013.
5. On August 27, 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' 3" tall and weighs 200 pounds.
7. Claimant is 34 years of age.
8. Claimant's impairments have been medically diagnosed as herniated discs, radiculopathy, migraines, right knee injury and depression.

9. Claimant has the following symptoms: pain, fatigue, insomnia, memory and concentration problems.
10. Claimant completed high school.
11. Claimant is able to read, write, and perform basic math skills.
12. Claimant is not working. Claimant last worked in January 2013 as a caregiver.
13. Claimant lives with her husband.
14. Claimant testified that she cannot perform some household chores.
15. Claimant takes the following prescribed medications:
  - a. Meloxicam
  - b. Hydrocodone
  - c. Wellbutrin
  - d. Topamax
16. Updated records were gathered following the August 18, 2013, hearing at the request of Claimant. Claimant waived timeliness standards.
17. The updated records were forwarded to the State Hearing Review Team and they again denied on January 17, 2014 because the medical evidence of record indicates that the Claimant retains the capacity to perform a wide range of simple, unskilled, sedentary work.
18. Claimant testified to the following physical limitations:
  - i. Sitting: 25 minutes
  - ii. Standing: 30 minutes
  - iii. Walking: ½ mile
  - iv. Bend/stoop: difficulty
  - v. Lifting: 5 lbs.
  - vi. Grip/grasp: no limitations
19. Claimant testified to experiencing pain, at a high level of 8 on an everyday basis with some pain always present at a low level of 7.
20. In a psychological evaluation dated July 25, 2013 Claimant was found to have a GAF score of 56 with diagnoses of pain disorder and depressive disorder. Claimant's prognosis was found to be fair to guarded.
21. An MRI Report dated January 31, 2013 of Claimant's cervical spine states the following under conclusion: "There is a right paracentral/ foraminal disc extrusion at C5-C6 resulting in mild to moderate mass effect on the spinal cord within this

region along with moderate right-sided foraminal narrowing. 2. Small disc osteophyte complex at C6-C7 results in moderate right and mild left neural foraminal narrowing.”

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

The regulations governing the hearing and a 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-P) 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 administers the MA-P 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 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 caregiver. Working as a caregiver, as described by Claimant at hearing, would be considered light work. The Claimant's impairments would prevent Claimant from doing past relevant work. This Administrative Law Judge will continue through step 5.

In the final step of the analysis is, 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 (6<sup>th</sup> 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 sedentary exertional level.

This Administrative Law Judge finds that Claimant is capable of the requisite sitting, standing and walking for a sedentary exertional job. The Claimant is a younger individual. 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 201.27 the Claimant is not disabled for the purposes of MA-P. Claimant's testimony regarding her limitations and ability to sit, stand, walk, lift and carry is not supported by substantial evidence. Claimant failed to present sufficient evidence that she 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 MA-P eligibility.

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



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

Date Signed: February 7, 2014

Date Mailed: February 7, 2014

**NOTICE OF APP EAL:** 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/las

cc:



