

**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 49281
Issue No.: 2009
Case No.: ██████████
Hearing Date: September 25, 2013
County: Wayne (82)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Lynn M. Ferris

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, an in person hearing was held on September 25, 2013, from Detroit, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included the Claimant. A witness, ██████████ ██████████ also appeared. ██████████ ██████████ also appeared as the Claimant's Authorized Hearing Representative (AHR). Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included ██████████ ES.

ISSUE

Whether the Department properly determined that Claimant is not "disabled" for purposes of the Medical Assistance (MA-P) and State Disability Assistance (SDA) benefit programs?

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 January 24, 2013 Claimant applied for MA-P and retro MA-P.
2. On January 25, 2013, the Medical Review Team denied Claimant's request.
3. The Department sent the Claimant the Notice of Case Action dated March 1, 2013 denying the Claimant's MA-P application. Exhibit 1

4. On May 15, 2013 Claimant's AHR submitted to the Department a timely hearing request.
5. On August 5, 2013 the State Hearing Review Team ("SHRT") found the Claimant not disabled and denied Claimant's request.
6. An Interim Order was issued on September 27, 2013 ordering the Department to obtain a consultative examination.
7. The new medical evidence was submitted to the State Hearing Review Team on December 10, 2013. On January 28, 2014 the State Hearing Review Team found the Claimant not disabled.
8. Claimant at the time of the hearing was [REDACTED] years old with a birth date of [REDACTED]. Claimant's height was 6' 1" and weighed 160 pounds.
9. Claimant completed high school.
10. The Claimant had no past employment history and has not worked after 1998.
11. Claimant alleges physical disabling impairments due to uncontrolled hypertension, right pleural effusion, deep vein thrombosis causing leg weakness and swelling, shortness of breath, and communicating. Hydrocephalus.
12. The Claimant has not alleged any mental disabling impairments.
13. Claimant's impairments have lasted or are expected to last for 12 months duration or more.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Medical Assistance (MA) program is established by the Title XIX of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 1396-1396w-5, and is implemented by 42 CFR 400.200 to 1008.59. The Department of Human Services (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers the MA program pursuant to MCL 400.10 and MCL 400.105.

The State Disability Assistance (SDA) program, which provides financial assistance for disabled persons, was established by 2004 PA 344. The Department administers the SDA program pursuant to MCL 400.10 *et seq.* and Mich Admin Code, Rules 400.3151 – 400.3180. Department policies are found in BAM, BEM, and RFT. A person is considered disabled for SDA purposes if the person has a physical or mental impairment which meets federal SSI disability standards for at least ninety days. Receipt of SSI benefits based on disability or blindness, or the receipt of MA benefits

based on disability or blindness automatically qualifies an individual as disabled for purposes of the SDA program.

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

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 symptoms, diagnosis and prognosis, what an individual can do despite impairment(s), and the physical or mental restrictions. 20 CFR 416.927(a)(2).

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).

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, Appendix 1, 12.00(C).

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.

Pursuant to 20 CFR 416.920, a five-step sequential evaluation process is used to determine disability. An individual's current work activity, the severity of the impairment, the residual functional capacity, past work, age, education and work experience are evaluated. If an individual is found disabled or not disabled at any point, no further review is made.

The first step is to determine if an individual is working and if that work is "substantial gainful activity" (SGA). If the work is SGA, an individual is not considered disabled regardless of medical condition, age or other vocational factors. 20 CFR 416.920(b).

Secondly, the individual must have a medically determinable impairment that is "severe" or a combination of impairments that is "severe." 20 CFR 404.1520(c). An impairment or combination of impairments is "severe" within the meaning of regulations if it significantly limits an individual's ability to perform basic work activities. An impairment or combination of impairments is "not severe" when medical and other evidence establish only a slight abnormality or a combination of slight abnormalities that would have no more than a minimal effect on an individual's ability to work. 20 CFR 404.1521; Social Security Rulings (SSRs) 85-28, 96-3p, and 96-4p. If the claimant does not have a severe medically determinable impairment or combination of impairments, he/she is not disabled. If the claimant has a severe impairment or combination of impairments, the analysis proceeds to the third step.

The third step in the process is to assess whether the impairment or combination of impairments meets a Social Security listing. If the impairment or combination of impairments meets or is the medically equivalent of a listed impairment as set forth in Appendix 1 and meets the durational requirements of 20 CFR 404.1509, the individual is considered disabled. If it does not, the analysis proceeds to the next step.

Before considering step four of the sequential evaluation process, the trier must determine the claimant's residual functional capacity. 20 CFR 404.1520(e). An individual's residual functional capacity is his/her ability to do physical and mental work activities on a sustained basis despite limitations from his/her impairments. In making this finding, the trier must consider all of the claimant's impairments, including impairments that are not severe. 20 CFR 404.1520(e) and 404.1545; SSR 96-8p.

The fourth step of the process is whether the claimant has the residual functional capacity to perform the requirements of his/her past relevant work. 20 CFR 404.1520(f). The term past relevant work means work performed (either as the claimant actually performed it or as is it generally performed in the national economy) within the last 15 years or 15 years prior to the date that disability must be established. If the claimant has the residual functional capacity to do his/her past relevant work, then the claimant is not disabled. If the claimant is unable to do any past relevant work or does not have any past relevant work, the analysis proceeds to the fifth step.

In the fifth step, an individual's residual functional capacity is considered in determining whether disability exists. An individual's age, education, work experience and skills are

used to evaluate whether an individual has the residual functional capacity to perform work despite limitations. 20 CFR 416.920(e).

The Claimant alleges physical disabling impairments due to uncontrolled hypertension, right pleural effusion, deep vein thrombosis causing leg weakness and swelling. Shortness of breath, and communicating. Hydrocephalus.

The Claimant alleges no mental disabling impairments.

A summary of the Claimant's medical evidence presented at the hearing and the new evidence presented follows.

A consultative examination was conducted on [REDACTED]. Appetite was reported as good. Pains in lower thoracic and upper lumbar area occasional but not every day. No radiation of pain to the legs. The Claimant did report drinking some. The patient was able to get on and off exam table. Gait was normal. The chest was clear to auscultation and percussion, no rhonchi or rales noted or significant wheezing. Motor strength was equal bilaterally and gait was normal. The exam concluded hypertension, recurrent pain affecting the lower back. Patient should not do any jobs involving frequent climbing and carrying, pushing or pulling over 30 to 40 pounds. Prognosis was fairly good. The exam was inconclusive stating rule out possible COPD, and history of tuberculosis. The examiner imposed restrictions including frequently lifting up to 25 pounds. Claimant could stand and/or walk at least 2 hours in an 8 hour workday and sit about six hours. No assistive devices were necessary. Pushing and pulling with both hands was also restricted.

In [REDACTED] the Claimant was admitted for a 7 day hospital stay. The Claimant was hospitalized for shortness of breath and trouble walking. His cough was productive with yellow sputum. At the time of the admission the Claimant was homeless. Claimant was found to have pleural effusion on the right verified by CT. The examination medical records noted that Claimant advised the examiner that he drinks 2 to 3 times per week and drinks only beer. The Claimant's PPD test was positive with no symptoms of current tuberculosis infection. The Claimant was hospitalized and received treatment for tuberculosis and placed in respiratory isolation. Throughout the 7 days of tuberculosis treatment the Claimant had no signs of shortness of breath or dyspnea and remained clinically stable. Claimant was released from the hospital as he was no longer contagious.

On [REDACTED] the patient was seen in ER and admitted due to being found sitting down on curb smelling of alcohol. Patient admitted drinking 2 pints of alcohol that day.

On [REDACTED] the Claimant presented to the ER with alcohol intoxication. The examination other than alcohol intoxication was within normal limits. Claimant was discharged home pending sobriety.

The Claimant was hospitalized for a 5 day stay on [REDACTED]. The exam indicated no cough, no chest pain, shortness of breath, fever chills, abdominal complaints. The discharge diagnosis was communicating hydrocephalus; and dandy walker malformation. At time of this admission he was admitted for weakness in lower limbs for 2-3 days. The problems managed in the hospital were wide gait but no ataxia with hydrocephalus that appears chronic possibly secondary to dandy walker variant. The report concluded no further active treatment needed at that time. Claimant was discharged home improved.

Here, Claimant has satisfied requirements as set forth in steps one, two, as Claimant is not employed and his impairments have met the Step 2 severity requirements.

In addition, the Claimant's impairments have been examined in light of the listings and after a review of the evidence the Claimant's impairments do not meet a listing as set forth in Appendix 1, 20 CFR 416.926. Listings 1.00 Musculoskeletal System (1.04) Disorders of the Spine; 3.00 Respiratory System, and 11.00 Neurological Disorders were reviewed and were determined not to have been met as no objective medical evidence supported such a finding. Therefore, vocational factors will be considered to determine Claimant's residual functional capacity to do relevant work.

In the present case, Claimant has alleged impairments due to uncontrolled hypertension, right pleural effusion, deep vein thrombosis causing leg weakness and swelling. Shortness of breath, and communicating Hydrocephalus.

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, Claimant has no past employment history within the last 15 years and therefore no analysis regarding capability to perform past relevant work can be made. Thus a Step 5 analysis is required 20 CFR 416.920(e).

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 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).

In Step 5, an assessment of the individual's residual functional capacity and age, education, and work experience is considered to determine whether an adjustment to other work can be made. 20 CFR 416.920(4)(v). At the time of hearing, the Claimant was 56 years old. and thus, is considered to be an individual of advanced age for MA-P purposes.

The Claimant has a high school education and has been restricted by the examining doctor as a result of a consultative examination conducted [REDACTED]. The examiner imposed restrictions including frequently lifting up to 25 pounds. Claimant could stand and/or walk at least 2 hours in an 8 hour workday and sit about six hours. No assistive devices were necessary. Pushing and pulling with both hands was also restricted. At the hearing the Claimant testified that he could stand for about 30 minutes

and sit for 2 to 4 hours and could walk less than 3 blocks with an unstable gait. The Claimant testified that he could carry 8 pounds. The Claimant's testimony was deemed credible. As Claimant has no relevant work history, he has no transferable skills. At the hearing the Claimant testified that he continued to drink infrequently due to his balance and gait problems. It is determined that alcohol is not material as even if the Claimant discontinued drinking he would still have the medical conditions he was evaluated to have.

Disability is found if an individual is unable to adjust to other work. *Id.* At this point in the analysis, the burden shifts from the Claimant to the Department to present proof that the Claimant has the residual capacity to substantial gainful employment. 20 CFR 416.960(2); *Richardson v Sec of Health and Human Services*, 735 F2d 962, 964 (CA 6, 1984).

While a vocational expert is not required, a finding supported by substantial evidence that the individual has the vocational qualifications to perform specific jobs is needed to meet the burden. *O'Banner v Sec of Health and Human Services*, 587 F2d 321, 323 (CA 6, 1978). Medical-Vocational guidelines found at 20 CFR Subpart P, Appendix II, may be used to satisfy the burden of proving that the individual can perform specific jobs in the national economy. *Heckler v Campbell*, 461 US 458, 467 (1983); *Kirk v Secretary*, 667 F2d 524, 529 (CA 6, 1981) *cert den* 461 US 957 (1983).

After a review of the entire record, including the Claimant's testimony and medical evidence presented, and the consultative doctor's evaluation who places the Claimant at a light work level, it is determined that the total impact caused by the physical impairment suffered by the Claimant must be considered. In doing so, it is found that the combination of the Claimant's physical impairments have a major impact on his ability to perform basic work activities. Accordingly, it is found that the Claimant is able to perform the full range of activities for light as defined in 20 CFR 416.967(a). After review of the entire record, and in consideration of the Claimant's age, education, work experience and residual functional capacity it is found pursuant to 20 CFR 202.04 that the Claimant is disabled for purposes of the MA-P program at Step 5.

DECISION AND ORDER

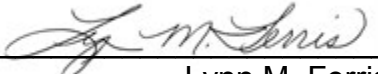
The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that Claimant is medically disabled as of September 2010.

Accordingly, the Department's decision is hereby REVERSED

THE DEPARTMENT IS ORDERED TO INITIATE THE FOLLOWING, IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEPARTMENT POLICY AND CONSISTENT WITH THIS HEARING DECISION, WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THE DATE OF MAILING OF THIS DECISION AND ORDER:

1. The Department is ORDERED to initiate a review of the application dated January 24, 2013 and any retro application if not done previously, to determine Claimant's non-medical eligibility.

2. A review of this case shall be set for February 2015.


Lynn M. Ferris
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed:

Date Mailed:

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

2013-49281/LMF

LMF/cl

cc:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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