

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

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

████████████████████  
████████████████████  
████████████████████

Reg. No.: 2013-59611  
Issue Nos.: 2009, 4009  
Case No.: ██████████  
Hearing Date: January 30, 2014  
County: Wayne (82-57)

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:** Jonathan W. Owens

**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 January 30, 2014, from Detroit, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included Claimant. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included ██████████

**ISSUE**

Whether the Department properly determined that Claimant is not "disabled" for purposes of the Medical Assistance (MA-P) and State Disability Assistance (SDA) 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. Claimant was approved MA-P by the Medical Review Team on April 10, 2012. A medical review was set for April 2013.
2. On May 3, 2013, the Department sent Claimant's case back to the Medical Review Team for a medical review.
3. On June 14, 2013, the Medical Review Team denied Claimant's request.
4. On July 17, 2013, Claimant submitted to the Department a request for hearing.

5. The State Hearing Review Team (SHRT) denied Claimant's request.
6. Claimant is 52 years old.
7. Claimant completed education through the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
8. Claimant has employment experience (last worked 2010) in landscaping work.
9. Claimant's limitations have lasted for 12 months or more.
10. Claimant suffers from previous left ankle fracture, colon cancer and depression.
11. Claimant has significant limitations on physical activities involving sitting, standing, walking, bending, lifting, and stooping.
12. Claimant has significant limitations on understanding, carrying out, and remembering simple instructions; use of judgment; responding appropriately to supervision, co-workers and usual work situations; and dealing with changes in a routine work setting.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

Department policies are contained in the Department of Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), Department of Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), and Department of Human Services Reference Tables Manual (RFT).

The Medical Assistance (MA) program is established by Title XIX of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 1396-1396w-5; 42 USC 1315; the Affordable Care Act of 2010, the collective term for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Pub. L. No. 111-148, as amended by the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-152; and 42 CFR 430.10-.25. The Department (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers the MA program pursuant to 42 CFR 435, MCL 400.10, and MCL 400.105-.112k.

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 42 CFR 435, MCL 400.10 *et seq.* and Mich Admin Code, Rules 400.3151 – 400.3180. A person is considered disabled for SDA purposes if the person has a physical or mental impairment which meets federal Supplemental Security Income (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.

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 (20R 416.901). The Department, 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.

The law defines disability as the inability to do substantial gainful activity (SGA) 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).

Once an individual has been determined to be “disabled” for purposes of disability benefits, continued entitlement to benefits must be periodically reviewed. In evaluating whether an individual’s disability continues, 20 CFR 416.994 requires the trier of fact to follow a sequential evaluation process by which current work activities, severity of impairment(s), and the possibility of medical improvement and its relationship to the individual’s ability to work are assessed. Review may cease and benefits may be continued at any point if there is a substantial evidence to find that the individual is unable to engage in substantial gainful activity. 20 CFR 416.994(b)(5).

The first step to be considered is whether the claimant can perform SGA defined in 20 CFR 416.920(b). In this case, Claimant is not working. Therefore, Claimant is not disqualified at this step in the evaluation.

In the second step, the trier of fact must determine if the claimant’s impairment (or combination of impairments) meets or equals the severity of an impairment listed in Appendix 1 of Subpart P of 20 CFR, Part 404. This Administrative Law Judge finds that Claimant’s medical record does not support a finding that 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. Accordingly, the sequential evaluation process must continue.

In the third step of the sequential evaluation, the trier of fact must determine whether there has been medical improvement as defined in 20 CFR 416.994(b)(1)(i). 20 CFR 416.994(b)(5)(iii). Medical improvement is any decrease in the medical severity of your impairment(s) which was present at the time of the most recent favorable medical decision that you were disabled or continued to be disabled. A determination that there has been a decrease in medical severity must be based on changes (improvement) in the symptoms, signs and/or laboratory findings associated with your impairment(s) (see §416.928). If there has been medical improvement as shown by a decrease in medical severity, the trier of fact must proceed to Step 4 (which examines whether the medical improvement is related to the claimant’s ability to do work). If there has been no decrease in medical severity and, thus, no medical improvement, the trier of fact moves to Step 5 in the sequential evaluation process.

In this case, Claimant was most recently approved for MA-P on April 10, 2012. In this case, the Administrative Law Judge, after comparing past medical documentation with current medical documentation, finds there is no medical improvement. The Department obtained a DHS-49 completed by a physician, who indicated Claimant’s

condition was deteriorating and he was to avoid lifting all weight and avoid the use of his hand/arm and feet/legs for repetitive movements.

Claimant further testified to the following symptoms and abilities: not able to stand more than 10 to 15 minutes, uses a cane to walk, can walk a ¼ block, can sit 15 minutes, ongoing lower back pain, poor grip and grasp with right hand, he is left handed, not able to bend or stoop, able to cook, struggles with cleaning, able to manage personal care, able to manage grocery shopping, not able to drive and goes to the doctor monthly.

In the fifth step of the sequential evaluation, the trier of fact must consider whether any of the exceptions in 20 CFR 416.994(b)(3) and (b)(4) applies. If none of them applies, Claimant's disability must be found to continue. 20 CFR 416.994(b)(5)(v).

The first group of exceptions to medical improvement (i.e., when disability can be found to have ended even though medical improvement has not occurred), found in 20 CFR 416.994(b)(3), is as follows:

- *Substantial evidence shows that you are the beneficiary of advances in medical or vocational therapy or technology (related to your ability to work).*
- *Substantial evidence shows that you have undergone vocational therapy (related to your ability to work).*
- *Substantial evidence shows that based on new or improved diagnostic or evaluative techniques your impairment(s) is not as disabling as it was considered to be at the time of the most recent favorable decision.*
- *Substantial evidence demonstrates that any prior disability decision was in error.*

In examining the record, this Administrative Law Judge finds that there is nothing to suggest that any of the exceptions listed above applies to Claimant's case.

The second group of exceptions to medical improvement, found at 20 CFR 416.994(b)(4), is as follows:


- *A prior determination or decision was fraudulently obtained.*
- *You did not cooperate with us.*
- *Claimant cannot be found.*
- *Claimant failed to follow prescribed treatment which would be expected to restore your ability to engage in substantial gainful activity.*

After careful review of the record, this Administrative Law Judge finds none of the above-mentioned exceptions applies to Claimant's case. Accordingly, per 20 CFR 416.994, this Administrative Law Judge concludes that Claimant's disability for purposes of Medical Assistance and State Disability Assistance must continue.

**DECISION AND ORDER**

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that Claimant continues to be medically disabled.

Accordingly, the Department's decision is hereby REVERSED and the Department is ORDERED to maintain Claimant's eligibility for MA and SDA if otherwise eligible for program benefits. A review of this case shall be set for August 2015.

  
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**Jonathan W. Owens**  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Maura Corrigan, Director  
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: July 24, 2014

Date Mailed: July 28, 2014

**NOTICE OF APPEAL:** A party may appeal this Hearing Decision in the circuit court in the county in which he/she resides or has its principal place of business in the State, or the circuit court in Ingham County, within 30 days of the receipt date.

A party may request a rehearing or reconsideration of this Hearing Decision from the Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS) within 30 days of the mailing date of this Hearing Decision, or MAHS may order a rehearing or reconsideration on its own motion.

MAHS may grant a party's Request for Rehearing or Reconsideration 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 party requesting a rehearing or reconsideration 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 this Hearing Decision is mailed.

A written request may be faxed or mailed to MAHS. If submitted by fax, 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:

2013-59611/JWO

Michigan Administrative Hearings  
Reconsideration/Rehearing Request  
P.O. Box 30639  
Lansing, Michigan 48909-07322

JWO/pf

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