

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

**IN THE MATTER OF:**



Reg. No.: 14-003453  
Issue No.: 2009; 4009  
Case No.: [REDACTED]  
Hearing Date: September 18, 2014  
County: Macomb (20)

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:** Christian Gardocki

**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; 7 CFR 273.15 to 273.18; 42 CFR 431.200 to 431.250; 45 CFR 99.1 to 99.33; and 45 CFR 205.10. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on September 18, 2014, from Detroit, Michigan. Participants included the above-named Claimant. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (DHS) included [REDACTED], Hearings Facilitator.

**ISSUE**

The issue is whether DHS properly denied Claimant's application for Medical Assistance (MA) and State Disability Assistance (SDA) for the reason that Claimant is not a disabled individual.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

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

1. On [REDACTED], Claimant applied for MA and SDA benefits.
2. Claimant's only basis for SDA benefits was as a disabled individual.
3. Claimant's only basis for Medicaid was as a disabled individual.
4. On [REDACTED], the Medical Review Team (MRT) determined that Claimant was not a disabled individual (see Exhibits 9-12).
5. On [REDACTED], DHS denied Claimant's application for MA and SDA benefits and mailed a Notice of Case Action (Exhibits 5-8) informing Claimant of the denial.

6. On [REDACTED], Claimant requested a hearing disputing the denial of MA and SDA benefits.
7. On [REDACTED], SHRT determined that Claimant was not a disabled individual, in part, by determining that Claimant did not have a severe impairment.
8. On [REDACTED], an administrative hearing was held.
9. During the hearing, Claimant and DHS waived the right to receive a timely hearing decision.
10. During the hearing, the record was extended 17 days; 14 days for Claimant to submit psychiatric and treatment documents and 3 days for DHS to submit any written objections; an Interim Order Extending the Record was subsequently mailed to both parties.
11. Claimant failed to submit additional medical documents.
12. As of the date of the administrative hearing, Claimant was a 54 year old male with a height of 5'8" and weight of 214 pounds.
13. Claimant alleged disability based on impairments and issues including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), schizophrenia, depression, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD), arthritis, and enlarged heart walls.

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

The Medicaid program is comprised of several sub-programs which fall under one of two categories; one category is FIP-related and the second category is SSI-related. BEM 105 (10/2010), p. 1. To receive MA under an SSI-related category, the person must be aged (65 or older), blind, disabled, entitled to Medicare or formerly blind or disabled. *Id.* Families with dependent children, caretaker relatives of dependent children, persons under age 21 and pregnant, or recently pregnant, women receive MA under FIP-related categories. *Id.* AMP is an MA program available to persons not eligible for Medicaid through the SSI-related or FIP-related categories though DHS does always offer the program to applicants. It was not disputed that Claimant's only potential category for Medicaid eligibility would be as a disabled individual.

Disability for purposes of MA benefits is established if one of the following circumstances applies:

- by death (for the month of death);
- the applicant receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits;
- SSI benefits were recently terminated due to financial factors;
- the applicant receives Retirement Survivors and Disability Insurance (RSDI) on the basis of being disabled; or
- RSDI eligibility is established following denial of the MA benefit application (under certain circumstances).

BEM 260 (7/2012) pp. 1-2

There was no evidence that any of the above circumstances apply to Claimant. Accordingly, Claimant may not be considered for Medicaid eligibility without undergoing a medical review process which determines whether Claimant is a disabled individual. *Id.*, p. 2.

Generally, state agencies such as DHS must use the same definition of SSI disability as found in the federal regulations. 42 CFR 435.540(a). Disability is federally defined as the inability to do any 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. A functionally identical definition of disability is found under DHS regulations. BEM 260 (7/2012), p. 8.

Substantial gainful activity means a person does the following:

- Performs significant duties, and
- Does them for a reasonable length of time, and
- Does a job normally done for pay or profit. *Id.*, p. 9.

Significant duties are duties used to do a job or run a business. *Id.* They must also have a degree of economic value. *Id.* The ability to run a household or take care of oneself does not, on its own, constitute substantial gainful activity. *Id.*

The person claiming a physical or mental disability has the burden to establish a disability through the use of competent medical evidence from qualified medical sources such as his or her medical history, clinical/laboratory findings, diagnosis/prescribed treatment, prognosis for recovery and/or medical assessment of ability to do work-related activities or ability to reason and make appropriate mental adjustments, if a mental disability is alleged. 20 CFR 413.913. An individual's subjective pain complaints are not, in and of themselves, sufficient to establish disability. 20 CFR 416.908; 20 CFR 416.929(a).

Federal regulations describe a sequential five step process that is to be followed in determining whether a person is disabled. 20 CFR 416.920. If there is no finding of disability or lack of disability at each step, the process moves to the next step. 20 CFR 416.920 (a)(4).

The first step in the process considers a person's current work activity. 20 CFR 416.920 (a)(4)(i). A person who is earning more than a certain monthly amount is ordinarily considered to be engaging in SGA. The monthly amount depends on whether a person is statutorily blind or not. "Current" work activity is interpreted to include all time since the date of application. The 2014 monthly income limit considered SGA for non-blind individuals is \$1,070.

Claimant testified that he recently started part-time work as a medical assistant. Claimant testified that he only received one pay check, for \$104 in gross income. Claimant's pay check failed to establish SGA income.

Claimant testified that he worked approximately 16-20 hours/week for \$13.50/hour. Claimant testified that he is unable to work more hours due to various impairments. Multiplying Claimant's average weekly hours (18) by his rate of pay (\$13.50) and a 4-week period results in a gross income of \$972, less than presumptive SGA limits.

It is found that Claimant is not performing SGA and has not performed SGA since the date of MA application. Accordingly, the disability analysis may proceed to step two.

The second step in the disability evaluation is to determine whether a severe medically determinable physical or mental impairment exists to meet the 12 month duration requirement. 20 CFR 416.920 (a)(4)(ii). The impairments may be combined to meet the severity requirement. If a severe impairment is not found, then a person is deemed not disabled. *Id.*

The impairments must significantly limit a person's basic work activities. 20 CFR 416.920 (a)(5)(c). "Basic work activities" refers to the abilities and aptitudes necessary to do most jobs. *Id.* Examples of basic work activities include:

- physical functions (e.g. walking, standing, sitting, lifting, pushing, pulling, reaching, carrying, or handling)
- capacities for seeing, hearing, and speaking, understanding; carrying out, and remembering simple instructions
- use of judgment
- responding appropriately to supervision, co-workers and usual work situations; and/or
- dealing with changes in a routine work setting.

Generally, federal courts have imposed a de minimus standard upon claimants to establish the existence of a severe impairment. *Grogan v. Barnhart*, 399 F.3d 1257, 1263 (10<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2005); *Hinkle v. Apfel*, 132 F.3d 1349, 1352 (10<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1997). *Higgs v Bowen*, 880 F2d 860, 862 (6<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1988). Similarly, Social Security Ruling 85-28 has been interpreted so that a claim may be denied at step two for lack of a severe impairment only when the medical evidence establishes a slight abnormality or combination of slight abnormalities that would have no more than a minimal effect on an individual's ability to work even if the individual's age, education, or work experience were specifically

considered. *Barrientos v. Secretary of Health and Human Servs.*, 820 F.2d 1, 2 (1<sup>st</sup> Cir. 1987). Social Security Ruling 85-28 has been clarified so that the step two severity requirement is intended “to do no more than screen out groundless claims.” *McDonald v. Secretary of Health and Human Servs.*, 795 F.2d 1118, 1124 (1<sup>st</sup> Cir. 1986).

SSA specifically notes that age, education, and work experience are not considered at the second step of the disability analysis. 20 CFR 416.920 (5)(c). In determining whether Claimant’s impairments amount to a severe impairment, all other relevant evidence may be considered. The analysis will begin with a summary of the relevant submitted medical documentation.

Hospital documents (Exhibits 23-55) from an admission dated [REDACTED] were presented. It was noted that Claimant presented with complaints of chest pain, leg pain, and vision changes. It was noted that cardiac enzymes were negative and that an EKG showed no ischemia. Claimant’s blood pressure was described as “decently controlled” (see Exhibit 37). It was noted that heart testing was normal. Impressions of hypertension, hyperlipidemia, gout, and chest pain (with typical and atypical features of angina). Discharge medications included the following: albuterol, allopurinol, aspirin, bupropion, hydrochlorothiazide, loratadine, losartan, metoprolol, simvastatin, and varenicline. A discharge date of [REDACTED] was noted.

Presented documents consisted entirely of one overnight hospital treatment for chest pain. Hospital findings noted some symptoms that may limit Claimant’s ambulation and/or lifting abilities. Discharge medications were suggestive of problems with angina, hay fever, high cholesterol, depression, and high blood pressure. Presented hospital records, by themselves, did not establish ongoing restrictions that would be expected to last 12 months or longer.

It should be noted that the record was extended specifically to allow Claimant to present evidence of ongoing restrictions. Claimant failed to submit any additional documents.

Based on the presented evidence, it is found that Claimant failed to establish a severe impairment. Accordingly, it is found that Claimant is not a disabled individual and that DHS properly terminated Claimant’s MA application

The State Disability Assistance (SDA) program which provides financial assistance for disabled persons is established by 2004 PA 344. DHS administers the SDA program pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and MAC R 400.3151-400.3180. DHS policies for SDA are found in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) and the Reference Tables Manual (RFT).

SDA provides financial assistance to disabled adults who are not eligible for Family Independence Program (FIP) benefits. BEM 100 (1/2013), p. 4. The goal of the SDA program is to provide financial assistance to meet a disabled person’s basic personal and shelter needs. *Id.* To receive SDA, a person must be disabled, caring for a disabled person, or age 65 or older. BEM 261 (1/2012), p. 1.

A person is disabled for SDA purposes if he/she:

- receives other specified disability-related benefits or services, see Other Benefits or Services below, or
  - resides in a qualified Special Living Arrangement facility, or
  - is certified as unable to work due to mental or physical disability for at least 90 days from the onset of the disability; or
  - is diagnosed as having Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS).
- Id.*

It has already been found that Claimant is not disabled for purposes of SDA benefits based on a finding that Claimant does not have a severe impairment. It was found above that Claimant failed to establish that he is impaired from performing basic work activities for a period of 12 months. The finding equally applies to a 90 day period. It is found that Claimant is not a disabled individual for purposes of SDA eligibility and that DHS properly denied Claimant's application for SDA benefits.

### **DECISION AND ORDER**

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, finds that DHS properly denied Claimant's MA and SDA benefit application dated [REDACTED] based on a determination that Claimant is not disabled.

The actions taken by DHS are **AFFIRMED**.



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**Christian Gardocki**  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Maura Corrigan, Director  
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: **10/28/2014**

Date Mailed: **10/28/2014**

CG / hw

**NOTICE OF APPEAL:** A party may appeal this Hearing Decision in the circuit court in the county in which he/she resides, 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:

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

cc:

