

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 14-010325
Issue No.: 4009
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: October 16, 2014
County: Mecosta

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Vicki Armstrong

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 October 16, 2014, from Lansing, Michigan. Claimant personally appeared and testified. Eligibility Specialist [REDACTED] and Assistance Payment Supervisor [REDACTED] appeared on behalf of the Department.

ISSUE

Whether the Department properly determined that Claimant was not disabled for purposes of the State Disability Assistance (SDA) benefit program?

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 February 5, 2014, Claimant applied for SDA.
- (2) On June 6, 2014, the Medical Review Team (MRT) denied Claimant's SDA application.
- (3) On August 12, 2014, the Department sent Claimant notice that his application was denied.
- (4) On August 19, 2014, Claimant filed a hearing request to contest the Department's negative action.
- (5) Claimant has a history of rheumatoid arthritis, bone spurs, bulging discs, hypertension, gastroesophageal reflux disease, degenerative disc disease, paresthesia, osteoarthritis, chronic pain, affective disorders and a learning disability.
- (6) Claimant is a 44 year old man born on [REDACTED].

- (7) Claimant is 5'6" tall and weighs 175 lbs.
- (8) Claimant has a seventh grade education. He cannot read, write, or do basic math.
- (9) Claimant last worked in 2012, delivering papers.
- (10) Claimant was appealing the denial of Social Security disability at the time of the hearing.

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 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.

Current legislative amendments to the Act delineate eligibility criteria as implemented by department policy set forth in program manuals. 2004 PA 344, Sec. 604, establishes the State Disability Assistance program. It reads in part:

Sec. 604 (1) The department shall operate a state disability assistance program. Except as provided in subsection (3), persons eligible for this program shall include needy citizens of the United States or aliens exempt from the Supplemental Security Income citizenship requirement who are at least 18 years of age or emancipated minors meeting one or more of the following requirements:

(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.

Specifically, this Act provides minimal cash assistance to individuals with some type of severe, temporary disability which prevents him or her from engaging in substantial gainful work activity for at least ninety (90) days.

"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. [SDA = 90 day duration].

[As Judge] We are responsible for making the determination or decision about whether you meet the statutory definition of disability. In so doing, we review all of the medical findings and other evidence that support a medical source's statement that you are disabled. 20 CFR 416.927(e).

In December, 2013, Claimant underwent an independent psychological evaluation. Claimant is diagnosed with Adjustment Disorder with depressed mood and a specific learning disorder with impairment in reading. The psychologist opined that Claimant struggles with ongoing medical issues including numbness in his arms, back pain, leg pain, parenthesis of upper extremities, osteoarthritis, and hypertension. Claimant's condition is further complicated by unemployment and subsequent financial hardships.

Claimant had an independent medical evaluation in January, 2014. Claimant can write his name only and cannot read. He had mild difficulty getting on and off the exam table, heel and toes walking and hopping. He had moderate difficulty squatting. Gait was normal. He has decreased sensation in the bilateral fingers and toes. His affect was confused.

X-rays of Claimant's lumbar spine showed mild degenerative disc disease from T12 through L5, mild levo curvature of the lumbar spine centered at L3-L4 and moderate degenerative disc disease and mild retrolisthesis at L5-S1.

Claimant's treating physician completed a musculoskeletal examination of Claimant finding moderate generalized tenderness in the left mid scapular region, and right upper trapezius are. Tinel's sign positive. The left shoulder had moderate generalized pain over the anterolateral border of the acromion, the infraspinatus, the long head of the biceps, the supraspinatus, the teres minor and the upper trapezius with diminished sensation. Tine's sign positive in the left wrist. Left grip strength is decreased. The treating physician opined Claimant has paresthesia and pain of both upper extremities and generalized osteoarthritis involving multiple sites. Because Claimant's treating physician's opinion is well supported by medically acceptable clinical and laboratory diagnostic techniques, it has controlling weight. 20 CFR 404.1527(d)(2).

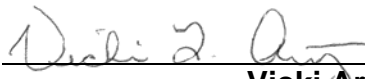
The credible testimony and medical records submitted at hearing verify Claimant was legally disabled for ninety (90) days, but no longer. As such, the Department's denial of SDA pursuant to Claimant's February 5, 2014, SDA application cannot be upheld.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the Department erred in determining that Claimant was not disabled by SDA eligibility standards.

Accordingly, the Department's decision is **REVERSED**, and this case is returned to the local office to determine whether Claimant met all the other financial and non-financial eligibility factors necessary to qualify for SDA.

It is SO ORDERED.



Vicki Armstrong
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: **10/27/2014**

Date Mailed: **10/27/2014**

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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:

