

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

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No.: 14-013810
Issue No.: 4009
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: November 20, 2014
County: Eaton

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 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 November 20, 2014, from Lansing, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included Claimant. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included [REDACTED].

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. Claimant applied for SDA on April 24, 2014.
2. The Medical Review Team denied the application on August 5, 2014.
3. Claimant filed a request for hearing on October 8, 2014, regarding the SDA denial.
4. A telephone hearing was held on November 20, 2014.
5. Claimant is 5' 2" tall and weighs 128 pounds.
6. Claimant is [REDACTED] years of age.
7. Claimant's impairments have been medically diagnosed as COPD, back, neck and shoulder pain.

8. Claimant has the following symptoms: pain, fatigue, shortness of breath.
9. Claimant completed 11th grade.
10. Claimant is able to read, write, and perform basic math skills.
11. Claimant is not working. Claimant last worked in January 2014 as a recycling center worker. Claimant previously worked as a housekeeper.
12. Claimant lives with her boyfriend.
13. Claimant testified that she cannot perform some household chores.
14. Claimant takes the following prescribed medications:
 - a. Symbicort
 - b. Spiriva
 - c. Atrovent
 - d. Ventolin
 - e. Norco
 - f. Omeprazole
 - g. Terbinofine
15. Claimant testified to the following physical limitations:
 - i. Sitting: 60 minutes
 - ii. Standing: 60 minutes
 - iii. Walking: 1 block
 - iv. Bend/stoop: difficulty
 - v. Lifting: 8 lbs.
 - vi. Grip/grasp: no limitations
16. Claimant testified to experiencing pain, at a high level of 10, on an everyday basis with some pain, always present, at a low level of 2.
17. An MRI Report of Claimant's cervical spine dated [REDACTED], showed the following under SUMMARY: "Mild/moderate degenerative changes of the cervical spine, most advanced at C6-C7. 2. Borderline degree of acquired central canal stenosis at C5-C6. 3. Mild degree of acquired central canal stenosis at C6-C7. Mild/moderate C6 and moderate/severe C7 neural foraminal stenosis. Correlate for any C6 or C7 radiculopathies."
18. Pulmonary Function testing completed on [REDACTED], showed best FVC level of 2.12 & FEV1 level of 1.10.

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.

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 this case, this Administrative Law Judge finds that Claimant may be considered presently disabled at the third step. Claimant meets listing 3.02(A) or its equivalent. The testimony of Claimant's treating therapist supports this position. This Administrative Law Judge will not continue through the remaining steps of the assessment. Claimant's testimony and the medical documentation support the finding that Claimant meets the requirements of the listing. Claimant has other significant health problems that were not fully addressed in this decision because Claimant is found to meet a listing for a different impairment.

Therefore, Claimant is found to be disabled.

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 April 2014.

Accordingly, the Department's decision is hereby **REVERSED** and the Department is **ORDERED** to:

1. Initiate a review of the application for SDA dated April 24, 2014, if not done previously, to determine Claimant's non-medical eligibility.
2. The Department shall inform Claimant of the determination in writing. A review of this case shall be set for December 2015.



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

Date Signed: **12/18/2014**

Date Mailed: **12/18/2014**

AM/jaf

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 48909-8139

cc:

