

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

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 14-001670  
Issue No.: 2009;4009  
Case No.: [REDACTED]  
Hearing Date: August 7, 2014  
County: Jackson

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:** William A. Sundquist

**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, telephone hearing was held on August 7, 2014, from Lansing, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

**ISSUE**

Whether the Department properly determined that Claimant was not disabled for purposes of the Medical Assistance (MA) and/or State Disability Assistance (SDA) benefit programs?

**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 MA-P/SDA on February 3, 2014, was denied on March 18, 2014, per BEM 260/261 and requested a hearing on May 2, 2014.
2. Claimant's vocational factors: Age 43, 10<sup>th</sup> grade education, and unskilled work experience.
3. Claimant's last employment ended in 2003.
4. Alleged disabling medical disorder(s): multiple mental/physical impairments in combination (DHS Ex A, p 99).
5. Medical evidence of record established severe impairments in combination for less than the one year continuous duration required for MA-P and 90 days for SDA.

## 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 this case,

"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.

...We follow a set order to determine whether you are disabled. We review any current work activity, the severity of your impairment(s), your residual functional capacity, your past work, and your age, education and work experience. If we can find that you are disabled or not disabled at any point in the review, we do not review your claim further.... 20 CFR 416.920.

When determining disability, the federal regulations are used as a guideline and require that several considerations be analyzed in sequential order. If disability can be ruled out at any step, analysis of the next step is not required. These steps are:

1. Does the client perform Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)? If yes, the client is ineligible for MA. If no, the analysis continues to Step 2. 20 CFR 416.920(b).

2. Does the client have a severe impairment that has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more or result in death? If no, the client is ineligible for MA. If yes, the analysis continues to Step 3. 20 CFR 416.920(c).

3. Does the impairment appear on a special listing of impairments or are the client's symptoms, signs, and laboratory findings at least equivalent in severity to the set of medical findings specified for the listed impairment? If no, the analysis continues to Step 4. If yes, MA is approved. 20 CFR 416.290(d).

4. Can the client do the former work that he/she performed within the last 15 years? If yes, the client is ineligible for MA. If no, the analysis continues to Step 5. 20 CFR 416.920(e).

5. Does the client have the Residual Functional Capacity (RFC) to perform other work according to the guidelines set forth at 20 CFR 404, Subpart P, Appendix 2, Sections 200.00-204.00? If yes, the analysis ends and the client is ineligible for MA. If no, MA is approved. 20 CFR 416.920(f).

The claimant had the burden of proof to establish disability in accordance with steps 1-4 above... 20CFR 416.912 (a). The burden of proof shifts to the DHS at Step 5... 20CFR 416.960 (c)(2).

[In reviewing your impairment]...We need reports about your impairments from acceptable medical sources.... 20 CFR 416.913(a).

Acceptable medical verification sources are licensed physicians, osteopaths, or certified psychologists ...20CFR 416.913(a)

...The medical evidence...must be complete and detailed enough to allow us to make a determination about whether you are disabled or blind. 20 CFR 416.913(d).

It must allow us to determine --

(1) The nature and limiting effects of your impairment(s) for any period in question;

(2) The probable duration of your impairment; and

(3) Your residual functional capacity to do work-related physical and mental activities. 20 CFR 416.913(d).

### Step 1

...If you are working and the work you are doing is substantial gainful activity, we will find that you are not disabled regardless of your medical condition or your age, education, and work experience. 20 CFR 416.920(b).

The evidence of record established that the claimant has not engaged in substantial gainful activity since 2003. . Therefore, the sequential evaluation is required to continue to the next step.

### Step 2

... [The record must show a severe impairment] which significantly limits your physical or mental ability to do basic work activities.... 20 CFR 416.920(c).

**Basic work activities.** When we talk about basic work activities, we mean the abilities and aptitudes necessary to do most jobs. Examples of these include:

1. Physical functions such as walking, standing, sitting, lifting, pushing, pulling, 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).

**Non-severe impairment(s).** An impairment or combination of impairments is not severe if it does not significantly limit your physical or mental ability to do basic work activities. 20 CFR 416.921(a).

...If you do not have any impairment or combination of impairments which significantly limits your physical or mental ability to do basic work activities, we will find that you do not have a severe impairment and are, therefore, not disabled. We will not consider your age, education, and work experience. 20 CFR 416.920(c).

The de minimis standard is applied to determine whether the medical evidence establishes impairments having more than a minimal effect on a person's mental or physical ability to do basic work activities (severity).

Medical evidence of record does establish Claimant's mental impairment or impairments in combination have more than a minimal effect on his/her ability to perform basic work activities but not for the required durations of one year continuous duration pursuant 20 CFR 416.909 and BEM 261.

The medical assessments should describe—

- (1) Your ability to do work-related activities such as sitting, standing, moving about, lifting, carrying, handling objects, hearing, speaking, and traveling; and
- (2) In cases of mental impairments, your ability to reason or make occupational, personal, or social adjustments...20 CFR 416.913(c).

The medical reports of record are mostly examination, diagnostic, treatment and progress reports. They do not provide medical assessments of Claimant's basic work limitations for the required duration.

Medical exam on [REDACTED] states the claimant's GAF score of 45 (DHS exhibit A, page 76).

Mental exam on [REDACTED] states the claimant is not significantly limited in understanding and memory, and sustaining concentration and persistence, (DHS exhibit A, page 7 and 8)

Assessment report on [REDACTED] states the claimant's condition is stable, that he is limited to lifting/carrying occasionally 10 pounds; and that he can stand, and/or walk less than two hours in an eight hour workday and sit less than six hours in an eight hour workday; that he needs no assistive device for ambulation; that he should be able to use his upper extremities on a repetitive basis for simple grasping, reaching, and find manipulating with the upper left extremity; and that he had no mental limitations (DHS exhibit A, pages 33 and 34).

The claimant's disabling symptoms are inconsistent with the objective medical evidence of record.

...Your symptoms, including pain, will be determined to diminish your capacity for basic work activities...to the extent that your alleged functional limitations and restrictions due to symptoms, such as pain, can reasonably be accepted as consistent with the objective medical evidence and other evidence. 20 CFR 416.929(c) (4).

...Statements about your pain or other symptoms will not alone establish that you are disabled; there must be medical signs and laboratory findings which show that you have a medical impairment.... 20 CFR 416.929(a).

...A statement by a medical source that you are "disabled" or "unable to work" does not mean that we will determine that you are disabled. 20 CFR 416.927(e).

Claimant had a GAF score(s) of 45 in August 2013. This is considered a severe mental impairment with occupational-functioning. DSM IV (4<sup>th</sup> edition-revised).

The medical evidence of record has not established the Claimant's abnormal mental/physical findings have persisted on a regular and continuing basis on repeated examinations for a reasonable presumption to be made that a severe mental/physical impairment has lasted or is expected to last for at least a one year continuous duration for MA and 90 days for SDA.

The Claimant has not sustained his/her burden of proof to establish a severe physical/mental impairment in combination, instead of a non-severe impairment, for the required durations.

Therefore, the sequential evaluation is required to stop at Step 2.

If disability had not already been denied at Step 2, it would also be denied at Steps 3, 4, and 5.

### **Step 3**

...If you have an impairment(s) which meets the duration requirement and is listed in Appendix 1 or is equal to a listed impairment(s), we will find you disabled without considering your age, education, and work experience. 20 CFR 416.920(d).

For each of the major body systems, the List of Impairments describes impairments which are considered severe enough to prevent a person from doing any substantial gainful activity. Most of the listed impairments are permanent or expected to result in death, or make a specific statement of duration. (20 CFR 404.1525 and 416.925).

The Claimant introduced no objective medical evidence of record that his impairments meets/equals a social security listing for the required duration. The SHRT physician agreed.

### **Step 4**

...If we cannot make a decision on your current work activities or medical facts alone and you have a severe impairment, we will then review your residual functional

capacity and the physical and mental demands of the work you have done in the past. If you can still do this kind of work, we will find that you are not disabled. 20 CFR 416.920(e).

...We consider that your work experience applies when it was done within the last 15 years, lasted long enough for you to learn to do it, and was substantial gainful activity. We do not usually consider that work you did 15 year or more before the time we are deciding whether you are disabled applies.... 20 CFR 416.965(a).

The claimant introduced no objective medical evidence of a severe impairment for the required one year continuous duration under Step 2 and inability to perform past work under Step 4.

### **Step 5**

If you cannot do any work you have done in the past because you have a severe impairment(s), we will consider your residual functional capacity and your age, education, and past work experience to see if you can do other work. If you cannot, we will find you disabled. 20 CFR 416.920(f)(1).

...Your residual functional capacity is what you can still do despite limitations. If you have more than one impairment, we will consider all of your impairment(s) of which we are aware. We will consider your ability to meet certain demands of jobs, such as physical demands, mental demands, sensory requirements, and other functions, as described in paragraphs (b), (c) and (d) of this section. Residual functional capacity is an assessment based on all of the relevant evidence.... 20 CFR 416.945(a).

...To determine the physical exertion requirements of work in the national economy, we classify jobs as sedentary, light, medium, heavy, and very 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).

**Younger person.** If you are under age 50, we generally do not consider that your age will seriously affect your ability to adapt to a new work situation.... 20 CFR 416.963(b).

...If you are unemployed because of your age and you can still do a significant number of jobs which exist in the national economy, we will find that you are not disabled.... 20 CFR 416.963(a).

The Claimant introduced no objective medical evidence under Step 4 of inability to do past work. This ALJ finds that the Claimant should be able to do less strenuous work than his/her past work, such as sedentary type work, as defined above.

Under the medical-vocational guidelines, Rule 201. 24 , a younger person age 43 with a 10<sup>th</sup> grade education and, an unskilled work history that is limited to sedentary work is not considered disabled.

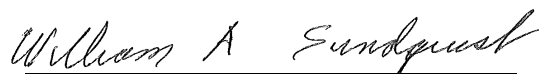
The department's Bridges Eligibility Manual contains the following policy statements and instructions for caseworkers regarding the State Disability Assistance program: to receive State Disability Assistance, a person must be disabled, caring for a disabled person or age 65 or older. BEM, Item 261, p. 1. Because the claimant does not meet the definition of disabled under the MA-P program and because the evidence of record does not establish that claimant is unable to work for a period exceeding 90 days, the claimant does not meet the disability criteria for State Disability Assistance benefits either.

Therefore, medical disability has not been established at Step 2, and also would not have been established at steps 3, 4, and 5 by the competent, material and substantial, evidence on the whole record.

The Administrative Law Judge, based on the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, if any, finds Claimant not disabled for purposes of the MA and/or SDA benefit program.

### **DECISION AND ORDER**

Accordingly, the Department's determination is **AFFIRMED**.



William A. Sundquist  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Maura Corrigan, Director  
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: **8/11/2014**

Date Mailed: **8/11/2014**

WAS/las

**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:

