

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

██████████
██
██████████

Reg. No.: 2014-16607
Issue No.: 2009; 4009
██████████ ██████████
Hearing Date: March 26, 2014
DHS County: Wayne (15)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Susan C. Burke

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 March 26, 2014, from Detroit, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included Claimant. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included ██████████, MCW.

ISSUE

Whether the Department properly determined that Claimant is not "disabled" for purposes of the Medical Assistance (MA) 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. On June 8, 2011 Claimant applied for Supplementary Security Income (SSI).
2. On April 3, 2012, the Social Security Administration (SSA) issued a Notice of Decision-Unfavorable.
3. Claimant appealed the SSA unfavorable decision.
4. On August 22, 2012, Claimant applied for MA and SDA.
5. On October 2, 2012, MRT approved Claimant's application for MA and SDA.

6. On September 6, 2013 the SSA Appeals Council upheld the April 3, 2012 SSA unfavorable decision.
7. On review dated November 15, 2013, MRT denied Claimant's request to continue MA.
8. On December 2, 2013, Claimant submitted to the Department a request for hearing.
9. Claimant is forty-five years old.
10. Claimant completed schooling through 10th grade.
11. Claimant has no relevant work experience in the last 15 years..
12. Claimant's limitations have lasted for 12 months or more.
13. Claimant suffers from back and chest pain and learning disabilities.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

MA is established by Title XIX of the Social Security Act and is implemented by Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The Department administers MA-P pursuant to MCL 400.10 *et seq.* and MCL 400.105. Department policies are found in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) and the Bridges Reference 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 MCL 400.10 *et seq.* and Mich Admin Code, Rules 400.3151 – 400.3180. Department policies are found in BAM, BEM, and RFT. 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.

SSA's determination that disability or blindness does **not**
exist for SSI is **final** for MA if:

- The determination was made after 1/1/90, **and**
- No further appeals may be made at SSA; see EXHIBIT II in this item, **or**
- The client failed to file an appeal at any step within SSA's 60 day limit, **and**
- The client is **not** claiming:
 - A totally different disabling condition than the condition SSA based its determination on, **or**
 - An additional impairment(s) or change or deterioration in his condition that SSA has **not** made a determination on.

Eligibility for MA based on disability or blindness does **not** exist once SSA's determination is **final**.

In the record presented, on June 8, 2011 Claimant applied for Supplementary Security Income (SSI). On April 3, 2012, a Social Security Administration (SSA) Administrative Law Judge issued a Notice of Decision-Unfavorable. Claimant appealed the SSA unfavorable decision. On August 22, 2012, Claimant applied for MA and SDA. On October 2, 2012, MRT approved Claimant's application for MA and SDA. On September 6, 2013 the SSA Appeals Council upheld the April 3, 2012 unfavorable SSA decision.

The SSA's Appeals Council decision of September 6, 2013 applied to information the SSA had in its record as of April 3, 2012. Since Claimant applied for MA on August 22, 2012, the SSA determination is not binding on Claimant's application of that date. Therefore, the MRT decision of October 2, 2012 was not incorrect.

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 Substantial Gainful Activity (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 on October 2, 2012. The Department did not present past medical documentation upon which the October 2, 2012 approval was based.. Therefore, this Administrative Law Judge cannot compare past medical documentation with current medical documentation, and as such finds there is no medical improvement.

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).

In 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 Department may argue that the prior disability decision was in error due to the SSA decision, but as noted above, Claimant applied for MA after the unfavorable decision by the SSA.

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

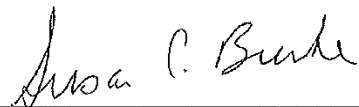
- *A prior determination or decision was fraudulently obtained.*
- *You did not cooperate with us.*
- *Claimant cannot be found.*
- *Claimant failed to follow prescribed treatment which would be expected to restore your ability to engage in substantial gainful activity.*

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 May of 2015.



Susan C. Burke
Administrative Law Judge
For Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: March 28, 2014

Date Mailed: March 31, 2014

NOTICE OF APPEAL: Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS) may order a rehearing or reconsideration on either its own motion or at the request of a party within 30 days of the mailing date of this Decision and Order. MAHS will not order a rehearing or reconsideration on the Department's motion where the final decision cannot be implemented within 90 days of the filing of the original request (60 days for FAP cases).

The claimant may appeal the Decision and Order to Circuit Court within 30 days of the receipt of the Decision and Order or, if a timely Request for Rehearing or Reconsideration was made, within 30 days of the receipt date of the Decision and Order of Reconsideration or Rehearing Decision.

A Request for Rehearing or Reconsideration may be granted 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 Department, AHR or the claimant 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 the hearing decision is mailed.

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

SCB/tm

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