

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 20146872
Issue No.: 2009, 4031
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: November 20, 2013
County: MA Spectrum Pilot

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: C. Adam Purnell

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 three-way telephone hearing was held on November 20, 2013 from Lansing, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included [REDACTED] (Claimant) and [REDACTED] (Claimant's treating physician). Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included [REDACTED] (Medical Contact Worker).

During the hearing, Claimant waived the time period for the issuance of this decision, in order to allow for the submission of additional medical records. The evidence was received, reviewed, and forwarded to the Medical Review Team (MRT) for consideration. On January 22, 2014, the Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS) received the third and final MRT determination which found Claimant was not disabled. This matter is now before the undersigned for a final decision.

ISSUE

Did the Department properly deny Claimant's application for Medical Assistance (MA-P) and State Disability Assistance (SDA)?

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 September 9, 2013, Claimant filed an application for Medical Assistance and State Disability Assistance benefits alleging disability.

2. On September 23, 2013, the Medical Review Team (MRT) denied Claimant's application.
3. On September 23, 2013, the Department caseworker sent Claimant notice that her application was denied.
4. On October 4, 2013, Claimant filed a request for a hearing to contest the Department's action.
5. A telephone hearing was held on November 20, 2013. Claimant had additional records that she wanted to include into the hearing record. During the hearing, the Administrative Law Judge held the record open to allow for Claimant's additional records to be submitted. Claimant consented and agreed to waive the time periods.
6. On January 22, 2014, the MRT again denied Claimant's application.
7. Claimant alleged the following physically disabling impairments: mixed connective tissue disease, rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and polymyositis.
8. At the time of the hearing, Claimant was 22 (twenty-two) years old with a birth date of [REDACTED], stood 6'2" tall and weighed approximately 230 (two-hundred and thirty) pounds (lbs).
9. Claimant has a high school diploma and, at the time of the hearing, was a part-time student at [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]). Claimant had no employment history.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Medical Assistance (MA) program 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 of Human Services (DHS or Department) administers the MA program 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 Program Reference Manual (PRM).

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 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

The person claiming a physical or mental disability has the burden to establish it through the use of competent medical evidence from qualified medical sources. Claimant's impairment must result from anatomical, physiological, or psychological abnormalities which can be shown by medically acceptable clinical and laboratory diagnostic techniques. A physical or mental impairment must be established by medical evidence consisting of signs, symptoms, and laboratory findings, not only the claimant's statement of symptoms. 20 CFR 416.908; 20 CFR 416.927. Proof must be in the form of medical evidence showing that the claimant has impairment and the nature and extent of its severity. 20 CFR 416.912. Information must be sufficient to enable a determination as to the nature and limiting effects of the impairment for the period in question, the probable duration of the impairment and the residual functional capacity to do work-related physical and mental activities. 20 CFR 416.913.

Medical findings must allow a determination of (1) the nature and limiting effects of your impairment(s) for any period in question; (2) the probable duration of the impairment; and (3) the residual functional capacity to do work-related physical and mental activities. 20 CFR 416.913(d).

Medical evidence may contain medical opinions. Medical opinions are statements from physicians and psychologists or other acceptable medical sources that reflect judgments about the nature and severity of the impairment(s), including your symptoms, diagnosis and prognosis, what an individual can do despite impairment(s), and the physical or mental restrictions. 20 CFR 416.927(a)(2).

All of the evidence relevant to the claim, including medical opinions, is reviewed and findings are made. 20 CFR 416.927(c). A statement by a medical source finding that an individual is "disabled" or "unable to work" does not mean that disability exists for the purposes of the program. 20 CFR 416.927(e). Statements about pain or other symptoms do not alone establish disability. Similarly, conclusory statements by a physician or mental health professional that an individual is disabled or blind, absent supporting medical evidence, is insufficient to establish disability. 20 CFR 416.927. There must be medical signs and laboratory findings which demonstrate a medical impairment.... 20 CFR 416.929(a).

...Medical reports should include –

- (1) Medical history.
- (2) Clinical findings (such as the results of physical or mental status examinations);
- (3) Laboratory findings (such as blood pressure, X-rays);

- (4) Diagnosis (statement of disease or injury based on its signs and symptoms).... 20 CFR 416.913(b).

The law does not require an applicant to be completely symptom free before a finding of lack of disability can be rendered. In fact, if an applicant's symptoms can be managed to the point where substantial gainful activity can be achieved, a finding of not disabled must be rendered.

The Administrative Law Judge is responsible for making the determination or decision about whether the statutory definition of disability is met. The Administrative Law Judge reviews all medical findings and other evidence that support a medical source's statement of disability.... 20 CFR 416.927(e).

In order to determine whether or not an individual is disabled, federal regulations require a five-step sequential evaluation process be utilized. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(1). The five-step analysis requires the trier of fact to consider an individual's current work activity; the severity of the impairment(s) both in duration and whether it meets or equals a listed impairment in Appendix 1; residual functional capacity to determine whether an individual can perform past relevant work; and residual functional capacity along with vocational factors (e.g. age, education, and work experience) to determine if an individual can adjust to other work. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(4); 20 CFR 416.945. If there is a finding that an individual is disabled or not disabled at any point in the review, there will be no further evaluation. 20 CFR 416.920.

At step one, the Administrative Law Judge must determine whether the claimant is engaging in substantial gainful activity (20 CFR 404.1520(b) and 416.920(b)). Substantial gainful activity (SGA) is defined as work activity that is both substantial and gainful. "Substantial work activity" is work activity that involves doing significant physical or mental activities (20 CFR 404.1572(a) and 416.972(a)). "Gainful work activity" is work that is usually done for pay or profit, whether or not a profit is realized (20 CFR 404.1572(b) and 416.972(b)). Generally, if an individual has earnings from employment or self-employment above a specific level set out in the regulations, it is presumed that he or she has demonstrated the ability to engage in SGA (20 CFR 404.1574, 404.1575, 416.974, and 416.975). If an individual engages in SGA, he or she is not disabled regardless of how severe his or her physical or mental impairments are and regardless of his or her age, education, and work experience. If the individual is not engaging in SGA, the analysis proceeds to the second step.

At step two, the Administrative Law Judge must determine whether the claimant has a medically determinable impairment that is "severe" or a combination of impairments that is "severe" (20 CFR 404.1520(c) and 416.920(c)). An impairment or combination of impairments is "severe" within the meaning of the regulations if it significantly limits an individual's ability to perform basic work activities. An impairment or combination of impairments is "not severe" when medical and other evidence establish only a slight abnormality or a combination of slight abnormalities that would have no more than a minimal effect on an individual's ability to work (20 CFR 404.1521 and 416.921; Social

Security Rulings (SSRs) 85-28, 96-3p, and 96-4p). If the claimant does not have a severe medically determinable impairment or combination of impairments, he or she is not disabled.

For mental disorders, severity is assessed in terms of the functional limitations imposed by the impairment. Functional limitations are assessed using the criteria in paragraph (B) of the listings for mental disorders (descriptions of restrictions of activities of daily living, social functioning; concentration, persistence, or pace; and ability to tolerate increased mental demands associated with competitive work)... 20 CFR, Part 404, Subpart P, App. 1, 12.00(C). First, an individual's pertinent symptoms, signs and laboratory findings are evaluated to determine whether a medically determinable mental impairment exists. 20 CFR 416.920a(b)(1). When a medically determinable mental impairment is established, the symptoms, signs and laboratory findings that substantiate the impairment are documented to include the individual's significant history, laboratory findings, and functional limitations. 20 CFR 416.920a(e)(2). Functional limitations are assessed based upon the extent to which the impairment(s) interferes with an individual's ability to function independently, appropriately, effectively and on a sustained basis. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(2). Chronic mental disorders, structured settings, medication and other treatment, and the effect on the overall degree of functionality are considered. 20 CFR 416.920a(c)(1). In addition, four broad functional areas (activities of daily living; social functioning; concentration, persistence or pace; and episodes of decompensation) are considered when determining and individual's degree of functional limitation. 20 CFR 416.920a(c)(4).

The second step allows for dismissal of a disability claim obviously lacking in medical merit. *Higgs v Bowen*, 880 F2d 860, 862 (CA 6, 1988). An impairment qualifies as non-severe only if, regardless of a claimant's age, education, or work experience, the impairment would not affect the claimant's ability to work. *Salmi v Sec of Health and Human Services*, 774 F2d 685, 692 (CA 6, 1985).

In determining disability under the law, the ability to work is measured. An individual's functional capacity for doing basic work activities is evaluated. If an individual has the ability to perform basic work activities without significant limitations, he or she is not considered disabled. 20 CFR 416.994(b)(1)(iv).

Basic work activities are 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).

At step three, the Administrative Law Judge must determine whether the claimant's impairment or combination of impairments meets or medically equals the criteria of an impairment listed in 20 CFR Part 404, Subpart P, Appendix 1 (20 CFR 404.1520(d), 404.1525, 404.1526, 416.920(d), 416.925, and 416.926). If the claimant's impairment or combination of impairments meets or medically equals the criteria of a listing and meets the duration requirement (20 CFR 404.1509 and 416.909), the claimant is disabled. If it does not, the analysis proceeds to the next step.

Before considering step four of the sequential evaluation process, the Administrative Law Judge must first determine the claimant's residual functional capacity (20 CFR 404.1520(e) and 416.920(e)). An individual's residual functional capacity is his/her ability to do physical and mental work activities on a sustained basis despite limitations from his/her impairments. In making this finding, all of the claimant's impairments, including impairments that are not severe, must be considered (20 CFR 404.1520(e), 404.1545, 416.920(e), and 416.945; SSR 96-8p).

Next, the Administrative Law Judge must determine at step four whether the claimant has the residual functional capacity to perform the requirements of his or her past relevant work (20 CFR 404.1520(f) and 416.920(f)). The term past relevant work means work performed (either as the claimant actually performed it or as it is generally performed in the national economy) within the last 15 (fifteen) years or 15 (fifteen) years prior to the date that disability must be established. In addition, the work must have lasted long enough for the claimant to learn to do the job and have been SGA (20 CFR 404.1560(b), 404.1565, 416.960(b), and 416.965). If the claimant has the residual functional capacity to do his or her past relevant work, the claimant is not disabled. If the claimant is unable to do any past relevant work or does not have any past relevant work, the analysis proceeds to the fifth and last step.

At the last step of the sequential evaluation process (20 CFR 404.1520(g) and 416.920(g)), the Administrative Law Judge must determine whether the claimant is able to do any other work considering his or her residual functional capacity, age, education, and work experience. If the claimant is able to do other work, he or she is not disabled. If the claimant is not able to do other work and meets the duration requirements, he or she is disabled.

To determine the physical demands (exertional requirements) of work in the national economy, we classify jobs as sedentary, light, medium and 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. The terms are defined as follows:

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).

Light work. Light work involves lifting no more than 20 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 10 pounds. Even though the weight lifted may be very little, a job is in this category when it requires a good deal of walking or standing, or when it involves sitting most of the time with some pushing and pulling of arm or leg controls.... 20 CFR 416.967(b).

Medium work. Medium work involves lifting no more than 50 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 25 pounds. If someone can do medium work, we determine that he or she can also do sedentary and light work. 20 CFR 416.967(c).

Heavy work. Heavy work involves lifting no more than 100 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 50 pounds. If someone can do heavy work, we determine that he or she can also do medium, light, and sedentary work. 20 CFR 416.967(d).

The analysis begins at Step 1. To be eligible for disability benefits, a person must be unable to engage in substantial gainful activity (SGA). Claimant is not engaged in substantial gainful activity. Therefore, Claimant is not disqualified from receiving disability at Step 1 and the analysis proceeds to Step 2.

At Step 2, Claimant's symptoms are evaluated to see if there is an underlying medically determinable physical or mental impairment(s) that could reasonably be expected to produce Claimant's pain or other symptoms. This must be shown by medically acceptable clinical and laboratory diagnostic techniques. Once an underlying physical or mental impairment(s) has been shown, the Administrative Law Judge must evaluate the intensity, persistence, and limiting effects of Claimant's symptoms to determine the extent to which they limit Claimant's ability to do basic work activities. For this purpose, whenever statements about the intensity, persistence, or functionally limiting effects of pain or other symptoms are not substantiated by objective medical evidence, a finding on the credibility of the statements based on a consideration of the entire case record must be made.

In the present case, Claimant alleges disability due to mixed connective tissue disease, rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and polymyositis.

The objective medical records confirm diagnoses of: rheumatoid arthritis, mixed connective tissue disease, cutaneous leukocytoclastic vasculitis, polymyositis, scleroderma, gastro esophageal reflux disease (GERD), hypocomplementemia and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Claimant also has restrictive lung disease and mild pulmonary hypertension.

Claimant's rheumatology progress notes, dated [REDACTED], indicate that she started taking Enbrel on [REDACTED] but she developed a rash. She was changed from Enbrel to Humira due to the rash. This note indicated that Claimant's arthritis had improved. On [REDACTED], Claimant's brain CT was negative.

On [REDACTED], records indicate that Claimant returned for a visit for the first time in months. Her rheumatologist found that Claimant's RA was worse and now Claimant required prednisone. Claimant declined the rheumatologist's offers for more aggressive treatment and requested to return to Humira. Claimant declined to have additional labs taken, but she consented to have a CBC, BUN, creatinine, AST, ALT and CK. Claimant's rheumatologist recommended that she discontinue the prednisone if she improved due to side effects.

Claimant had a chest x-ray on [REDACTED] for shortness of breath that had worsened over the last three months. The heart and mediastinum were normal. The lungs were slightly hypoaerated but had no focal infiltrates. On [REDACTED], Claimant had a chest CT which showed no evidence of a definite pulmonary embolus, but she did have a small left pleural effusion. She had evidence of pulmonary edema or pneumonia, a moderate size pericardial effusion. She had mild bilateral atelectasis or a scar. There was probable splenomegaly.

The record contained several occupational therapy records which indicated that Claimant was working on opening a bottle of water and writing for more than 15 minutes without pain. She attempted to unlock a dorm room door within a reasonable time. Over time, Claimant demonstrated physical and functional gains demonstrating increased hand mobility. She was educated on adaptive devices such as built up pens and cap openers.

On [REDACTED], Claimant presented to [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] for chest pain and shortness of breath with exertion. Consultative physician recommended she take Plaquenil for her mixed connective tissue disorder. Her pulmonary function test (PFT) showed decreased FVC and decreased FEV1, normal FEV1/FVC percentage with decreased total lung capacities and decreased DLCO. Claimant was given Solu-Medrol for her joint pain and inflammation. She was discharged on [REDACTED].

On [REDACTED], Claimant visited the [REDACTED] with complaints of difficulty breathing, rapid heartbeat and lightheadedness; she was discharged with pericardial effusion.

On [REDACTED], Claimant's progress notes showed that she had undifferentiated connective tissue disease, lung diseases (not elsewhere classified) and improved arthritis, but active disease remained. Her endurance and work capacity appeared to be affected by her underlying conditions.

The objective medical evidence shows that Claimant has a combination of impairments that is "severe" for purposes of Step 2. Claimant's records show that she has a myriad of diagnoses including: mixed connective tissue disease (polymyositis, scleroderma, and RA) with recent restrictive lung disease, mild pulmonary hypertension, and anemia. The records from [REDACTED] show that Claimant was hospitalized for severe shortness of breath and chest pain. The results of the tests and physician consultations revealed that the bulk of Claimant's breathing issues were caused by her mixed connective tissue disease. The evidence shows that this disease progression is worsening.

According to the objective medical evidence, Claimant's impairments affect her ability to work. The evidence demonstrates that Claimant has significant limitations in the ability to perform the following physical functions such as: walking, standing, sitting, lifting, pushing, pulling, reaching, carrying, or handling. Claimant requires the use of a portable oxygen unit compressor to breathe. Claimant is making good faith attempts to educate herself by attending classes at [REDACTED] despite having only 7 credit hours.

The objective medical evidence in this matter reveals that Claimant does have a mental and/or emotional impairment that can fairly be characterized as "severe" for purposes of the Step 2 analysis. This evidence shows that Claimant has a medically determinable mental impairment based on documented signs, symptoms, and laboratory findings that substantiate the impairment. The impairment is due to her diagnosis of ADHD.

Claimant has presented objective medical evidence that demonstrates she has some physical and mental limitations on her ability to perform basic work activities. The medical evidence has established that Claimant has an impairment, or combination of impairments, that has more than a *de minimus* effect on her basic work activities. Further, the impairments have lasted continuously for 12 (twelve) months; therefore, Claimant is not disqualified from receiving MA-P benefits at Step 2.

The analysis proceeds to Step 3 where the medical evidence of Claimant's conditions is compared to the listings. In light of the medical evidence, listings 3.02 (chronic pulmonary insufficiency), 14.04 (scleroderma), 14.05 (polymyositis and dermatomyositis), 14.06 (undifferentiated and mixed connective tissue disease) and 14.09 (inflammatory arthritis) are considered.

Listing 3.02 requires a FEV₁ equal to or less than the values specified in table I corresponding to the person's height without shoes. Claimant is 6'2" (74 inches) tall which requires a FEV₁ equal to or less than 1.65. According to the [REDACTED] hospital admission, Claimant's FEV₁ was greater than 1.65 and was found to be normal.

Listing 14.04 requires involvement of two or more organs/body systems with one involved to at least a moderate level of severity and at least two of the following: severe fatigue, fever, malaise, or involuntary weight loss. Claimant did not have medical evidence of at least two of these conditions. In fact, Claimant was able to attend class at [REDACTED] part-time despite her conditions. Claimant also did not have atrophy in the upper or lower extremities nor did she have toe or finger contractures or fixed deformities.

For 14.05 of the listings, Claimant does have proximal limb-girdle (pelvic or shoulder) muscle weakness, resulting in inability to ambulate effectively or inability to perform fine and gross movements effectively. The records show Claimant has impaired respiration due to intercostal and diaphragmatic muscle weakness and limitation of joint mobility or intestinal motility. Claimant meets the definition of 14.05 of the listings. Claimant also meets listing 14.06 due to her advanced mixed connective tissue disease.

Ultimately, it is found that Claimant's impairments do meet the intent and severity requirement of a listed impairment and, therefore, Claimant can be found disabled at Step 3. Because Claimant does have an impairment that meets or medically equals the criteria of a listed impairment, she meets the Step 3 requirement.

Before Step 4, the Administrative Law Judge must determine Claimant's residual functional capacity to perform the requirements of her past relevant work. Here, Claimant does not have an appreciable work history. She is a part-time college student.

To determine the physical demands (exertional requirements) of work in the national economy, jobs are classified as sedentary, light, medium, heavy, and very heavy. 20 CFR 416.967. Sedentary work involves lifting of no more than 10 pounds at a time and occasionally lifting or carrying articles like docket files, ledgers, and small tools. 20 CFR 416.967(a). 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. *Id.* Jobs are sedentary if walking and standing are required occasionally and other sedentary criteria are met. Light work involves lifting no more than 20 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying objects weighing up to 10 pounds. 20 CFR 416.967(b). Even though weight lifted may be very little, a job is in this category when it requires a good deal of walking or standing, or when it involves sitting most of the time with some pushing and pulling of arm or leg controls. *Id.* To be considered capable of performing a full or wide range of light work, an individual must have the ability to do substantially all of these activities. *Id.* An individual capable of light work is also capable of sedentary work, unless there are additionally limiting factors such as loss of fine dexterity or inability to sit for long periods of time. *Id.* Medium work involves lifting no more than 50 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 25 pounds. 20 CFR 416.967(c). An individual capable of performing medium work is also capable of light and sedentary work. *Id.* Heavy work involves lifting no more than 100 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 50 pounds. 20 CFR 416.967(d). An individual capable of heavy work is also capable of medium, light, and sedentary work. *Id.* Finally, very heavy work involves lifting objects weighing more than 100 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying objects

weighing 50 pounds or more. 20 CFR 416.967(e). An individual capable of very heavy work is able to perform work under all categories. *Id.*

Limitations or restrictions which affect the ability to meet the demands of jobs other than strength demands (exertional requirements, i.e. sitting, standing, walking, lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling) are considered nonexertional. 20 CFR 416.969a(a). In considering whether an individual can perform past relevant work, a comparison of the individual's residual functional capacity with the demands of past relevant work. *Id.* If an individual can no longer do past relevant work the same residual functional capacity assessment along with an individual's age, education, and work experience is considered to determine whether an individual can adjust to other work which exists in the national economy. *Id.* Examples of non-exertional limitations or restrictions include difficulty function due to nervousness, anxiousness, or depression; difficulty maintaining attention or concentration; difficulty understanding or remembering detailed instructions; difficulty in seeing or hearing; difficulty tolerating some physical feature(s) of certain work settings (i.e. can't tolerate dust or fumes); or difficulty performing the manipulative or postural functions of some work such as reaching, handling, stooping, climbing, crawling, or crouching. 20 CFR 416.969a(c)(1)(i) – (vi). If the impairment(s) and related symptoms, such as pain, only affect the ability to perform the non-exertional aspects of work-related activities, the rules in Appendix 2 do not direct factual conclusions of disabled or not disabled. 20 CFR 416.969a(c)(2). The determination of whether disability exists is based upon the principles in the appropriate sections of the regulations, giving consideration to the rules for specific case situations in Appendix 2. *Id.*

The undersigned finds that Claimant's medically determinable impairments could reasonably be expected to cause the alleged symptoms. Claimant's statements concerning the intensity, persistence and limiting effects of these symptoms are credible to the extent they are consistent with the objective medical records. Claimant's testimony regarding her symptoms and functional limitations is credible.

The fourth step in analyzing a disability claim requires an assessment of Claimant's residual functional capacity (RFC) and past relevant employment. 20 CFR 416.920(a)(4)(iv). An individual is not disabled if he/she can perform past relevant work. *Id.*; 20 CFR 416.960(b)(3). Past relevant work is work that has been performed within the past 15 years that was a substantial gainful activity and that lasted long enough for the individual to learn the position. 20 CFR 416.960(b)(1). Vocational factors of age, education, and work experience, and whether the past relevant employment exists in significant numbers in the national economy is not considered. 20 CFR 416.960(b)(3).

This Administrative Law Judge finds sufficient evidence in this record that demonstrates Claimant is unable to perform her past relevant work. Claimant has no work history. The analysis proceeds to the fifth and final step.

At Step 5, this Administrative Law Judge must determine whether or not Claimant has the residual functional capacity to do any other work in the national economy

considering her residual functional capacity, age, education, and work experience. At this point, the burden of proof shifts to the Department. The entire record shows that Claimant is capable of sedentary work. The record shows that Claimant attends classes, at least part-time, with the assistance of an oxygen tank and when she has episodes of shortness of breath, she is unable to walk at all. Claimant experiences severe pain in her joints due to her polymyositis and mixed connective tissue disease. Despite Claimant's resolve as a student, which is admirable, her attempts appear to be ill-fated. The records showed that Claimant's grade point average is well below average. This Administrative Law Judge finds that the objective medical evidence on the record shows that Claimant has no residual functional capacity. Consequently, Claimant is not disqualified from receiving disability at Step 5 based upon the fact that she has established by objective medical evidence that she cannot perform sedentary work even with her impairments.

After careful review of Claimant's extensive medical record, and the Administrative Law Judge's personal interaction with Claimant at the hearing, this Administrative Law Judge finds that Claimant's exertional and non-exertional impairments render Claimant unable to engage in a full range of, even sedentary, work activities on a regular and continuing basis. 20 CFR 404, Subpart P, Appendix 11, Section 201.00(h). See Social Security Ruling 83-10; *Wilson v Heckler*, 743 F2d 216 (1986). The Department has failed to provide vocational evidence which establishes that Claimant has the residual functional capacity for substantial gainful activity and, that given Claimant's age, education, and work experience, there are significant numbers of jobs in the national economy which the Claimant could perform despite her limitations.

Claimant has satisfied the burden of proof to show by competent, material and substantial evidence that she has an impairment or combination of impairments which would significantly limit the physical or mental ability to do basic work activities. 20 CFR 416.920(c). The objective clinical documentation submitted by Claimant is sufficient to establish a finding that Claimant is disabled. There is objective medical evidence to substantiate Claimant's assertion that her alleged impairment(s) is severe enough to reach the criteria and definition of disability. Claimant is disabled for the purposes of the Medical Assistance disability (MA-P) program.

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

With regard to Claimant's request for disability under the State Disability Assistance (SDA) program, it should be noted that the Department's Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) contains policy statements and instructions for caseworkers regarding the SDA program. In order to receive SDA, "a person must be disabled, caring for a disabled person or age 65 or older." BEM, Item 261, p. 1 (July, 2013).

A person is disabled for SDA purposes if he or she: (1) receives other specified disability-related benefits or services¹; or (2) resides in a qualified Special Living Arrangement facility; or (3) is certified as unable to work due to mental or physical disability for at least 90 days from the onset of the disability; or (4) is diagnosed as having Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). BEM 261 pp 1-2 (July, 2013).

Because Claimant meets the definition of disabled under the MA-P program and because the evidence of record shows that Claimant is unable to work for a period exceeding 90 (ninety) days, Claimant is also disabled for purposes of the SDA program.

The Department has not established by the necessary competent, material and substantial evidence on the record that it acted in compliance with Department policy when it determined that Claimant was not eligible to receive Medical Assistance, Retro Medical Assistance and State Disability Assistance.

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 September 1, 2013 with retro coverage to June 1, 2013.

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

1. Initiate a review of the application for SDA and MA dated September 9, 2013, 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 1, 2014.



C. Adam Purnell
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: February 6, 2014

Date Mailed: February 6, 2014

¹Retirement, Survivors and Disability Insurance (RSDI) due to disability/blindness, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) due to disability/blindness, Medicaid as blind/disabled based on a disability examiner or MRT determination or hearing decision, or Michigan Rehabilitation Services.

NOTICE OF APPEAL: 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.

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).

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

CAP/aca

cc:

