

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

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Reg. No.: 2014 7971
Issue No.: 2009
Case No.: ██████████
Hearing Date: March 5, 2014
County: Wayne DHS (82-18)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Lynn M. Ferris

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 5, 2014 from Detroit, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included the Claimant. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included ██████████, Medical Contact Worker.

ISSUE

Whether the Department properly determined that Claimant is not "disabled" for purposes of the Medical Assistance (MA-P) program?

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 July 15, 2013, Claimant applied for MA-P.
2. On October 1, 2013, the Medical Review Team denied Claimant's request.
3. The Department sent the Claimant the Notice of Case Action dated October 10, 2013, denying the Claimant's MA-P application. Exhibit 1
4. On October 18, 2013, Claimant submitted to the Department a timely hearing request.

5. On January 7, 2014, the State Hearing Review Team (“SHRT”) found the Claimant not disabled and denied Claimant’s request.
6. An Interim Order was entered on March 18, 2014 requesting the Claimant and the Department obtain additional medical evidence and medical records.
7. The new evidence was submitted to the State Hearing Review Team (SHRT) on March 18, 2014 and the SHRT denied disability on May 16, 2014.
8. Claimant at the time of the hearing was 53 years old with a birth date of [REDACTED]. The Claimant is now 54 years of age. Claimant’s height was 5’11” and weighed 180 pounds. The Claimant has lost 80 pounds in the last six months.
9. Claimant completed the 11th grade. The Claimant’s past work was as a delivery truck driver and working in a shipping and receiving department processing paperwork.
10. Claimant alleges physical disabling impairments due to carpal tunnel bilateral in both hands, diabetic neuropathy in both lower extremities feet and legs, diabetic retinopathy and diabetes.
11. Claimant has not alleged mental disabling impairments.
12. Claimant’s impairments have lasted or are expected to last for 12 months duration or more.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

MA-P 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).

Pursuant to Federal Rule 42 CFR 435.540, the Department uses the Federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) policy in determining eligibility for disability under MA-P. 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.

A set order is used to determine disability. Current work activity, severity of impairments, residual functional capacity, past work, age, or education and work

experience are reviewed. 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.

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 symptoms, diagnosis and prognosis, what an individual can do despite impairment(s), and the physical or mental restrictions. 20 CFR 416.927(a)(2).

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).

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, Appendix 1, 12.00(C).

The residual functional capacity is what an individual can do despite limitations. All impairments will be considered in addition to ability to meet certain demands of jobs in the national economy. Physical demands, mental demands, sensory requirements and other functions will be evaluated. 20 CFR 416.945(a).

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.

Pursuant to 20 CFR 416.920, a five-step sequential evaluation process is used to determine disability. An individual's current work activity, the severity of the impairment, the residual functional capacity, past work, age, education and work experience are evaluated. If an individual is found disabled or not disabled at any point, no further review is made.

The first step is to determine if an individual is working and if that work is "substantial gainful activity" (SGA). If the work is SGA, an individual is not considered disabled regardless of medical condition, age or other vocational factors. 20 CFR 416.920(b).

Secondly, the individual must have a medically determinable impairment that is "severe" or a combination of impairments that is "severe." 20 CFR 404.1520(c). An impairment or combination of impairments is "severe" within the meaning of 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; 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/she is not disabled. If the Claimant has a severe impairment or combination of impairments, the analysis proceeds to the third step.

The third step in the process is to assess whether the impairment or combination of impairments meets a Social Security listing. If the impairment or combination of impairments meets or is the medically equivalent of a listed impairment as set forth in Appendix 1 and meets the durational requirements of 20 CFR 404.1509, the individual is considered disabled. If it does not, the analysis proceeds to the next step.

Before considering step four of the sequential evaluation process, the trier must determine the Claimant's residual functional capacity. 20 CFR 404.1520(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, the trier must consider all of the Claimant's impairments, including impairments that are not severe. 20 CFR 404.1520(e) and 404.1545; SSR 96-8p.

The fourth step of the process is whether the Claimant has the residual functional capacity to perform the requirements of his/her past relevant work. 20 CFR 404.1520(f). The term past relevant work means work performed (either as the Claimant actually performed it or as is it generally performed in the national economy) within the last 15 years or 15 years prior to the date that disability must be established. If the Claimant has the residual functional capacity to do his/her past relevant work, then 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 step.

In the fifth step, an individual's residual functional capacity is considered in determining whether disability exists. An individual's age, education, work experience and skills are used to evaluate whether an individual has the residual functional capacity to perform work despite limitations. 20 CFR 416.920(e).

The Claimant alleges physical disabling impairments due to carpal tunnel bilateral in both hands, diabetic neuropathy in lower extremities feet and legs, diabetic retinopathy and diabetes.

A summary of the Claimant's medical evidence presented at the hearing follows.

A complete ophthalmologic examination was conducted on November 13, 2013. The notes indicate that the Claimant underwent vitrectomy surgery in August 2013 for diabetic retinopathy. On examination, the best corrected visual acuity is 20/150 on the right and 20/30 on the left. There was good reliability of 62° horizontal field on the right and 110° of horizontal field on the left. The assessment was diabetic retinopathy, cataracts and Presbyopia. The notes indicate that the Claimant has difficulty reading

without glasses. Fortunately, he has best corrected vision on the left side and full visual fields. Based upon these findings, he should be able to read small print with his left eye and avoid hazards in his environment. His prognosis is uncertain although it is likely that his vision **will** improve further with cataract surgery.

A DHS 49 Medical Examination Report was completed on March 16, 2014 by Claimant's family practice doctor. The current diagnosis was diabetes, diabetic retinopathy, diabetic neuropathy and bilateral carpal tunnel. Notes to the neurological part of the examination include weakness bilaterally and sensations bilaterally of the lower extremities. The examiner felt that the Claimant's condition was deteriorating and in answer to whether the disability was temporary/date expected to return to work, the doctor responded "never." Limitations were imposed by the examiner indicating the Claimant was incapable of using his hands or arms in repetitive action for simple grasping, reaching, pushing/pulling in fine manipulation. The Claimant was also evaluated as unable to operate foot/leg controls with either leg. The medical findings supporting the physical limitations were diabetic retinopathy leading to blindness, diabetic neuropathy both lower extremities and bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome. No mental limitations were noted. The doctor further related that the Claimant was unable to meet his needs in his home. The doctor has treated the Claimant for approximately 2 years.

A progress note from [REDACTED] notes the Claimant was seen there on January 10, 2014. At the time both hands were reported as numb. The examiner notes that the Claimant has trouble sleeping due to the tingling and throbbing in his feet. Under neurological weakness the progress note indicates both bilateral right and left hands and feet the impression was diabetic neuropathy rule out bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome and evaluate by an EMG. The Claimant is seen at this clinic every month for review and prescription refill.

On January 24, 2014, a letter from Claimant's ophthalmologist was presented as part of the evidence of record. The treating doctor indicated the Claimant's vision is 20/200 in the right eye which makes him legally blind and left eye vision is 20/100 and based upon his left eye and his decreased vision Claimant was evaluated as unable to drive.

A Medical Examination Report, DHS 49 was completed on August 16, 2013 by the Claimant's ophthalmologist the diagnosis was proliferative diabetic retinopathy. At that time, the vision on the right was 20/125 and left was 20/40. The clinical impression was that the Claimant was deteriorating, noting he would need a vitrectomy soon. No limitations were imposed. In a further noted poor vision in the right eye and that the limitation was to expected to last more than 90 days. The Claimant was evaluated as being unable to meet his needs in the home.

The Claimant had a postoperative follow-up after eye surgery the diagnosis was vitreous hemorrhage proliferative diabetic retinopathy. The eye exam was 20/200 in the right eye 20/60 in the left eye.

Here, Claimant has satisfied requirements as set forth in steps one, two, as Claimant is not employed and has demonstrated impairments which have met the Step 2 severity requirements.

In addition, the Claimant's impairments have been examined in light of the listings and after a review of the evidence the Claimant's impairments do not meet a listing as set forth in Appendix 1, 20 CFR 416.926. Listing 2.02 Loss of Visual Acuity was reviewed the listing requires: The Act defines blindness as central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of a correcting lens. We use your best-corrected central visual acuity for distance in the better eye when we determine if this definition is met. (For visual acuity testing requirements, see 2.00A5.) Based upon a review of the eye examination reports provided is the medical evidence in this case it is determined that the listing is not met based upon the examination results.

Listing 9.00 Endocrine Disorders was also reviewed regarding diabetes mellitus. As the Claimant testified that his diabetes was otherwise under control and there were no other incidents described arising from the diabetes other than the neuropathies analyzed above, it is determined that the listing 9.00 was not met.

Claimant has a number of symptoms and limitations, as cited above, as a result of these conditions. Claimant's treating physician noted that Claimant would be unable to use his hands or feet in work related activities as set forth in detail above. It was noted that due to carpal tunnel the Claimant was noted as unable to reach or push and pull, grasp simple objects and fine manipulation with both hands and unable to operate foot controls. The Claimant was evaluated as deteriorating and required assistance in the home.

Claimant credibly testified to the following symptoms and abilities: the Claimant could not walk more than 10 minutes at most, he could stand for 15 minutes, and could sit for much of the day. The Claimant could lift/ carry no more than two to three pounds. The Claimant testified he could not squat due to lack of strength in his legs. The Claimant experiences severe pain in both his feet for most of the day and also has neuropathy in both his hands with carpal tunnel.

In the fourth step of the analysis, the issue to be considered is whether the Claimant has the ability to perform work previously performed by the Claimant within the past 15 years. The trier of fact must determine whether the impairment(s) presented prevent the Claimant from doing past relevant work. In the present case, the Claimant's past work was as a delivery truck driver and working in a shipping and receiving department processing paperwork.

Given the Claimant's documented limitations with the use of his hands, the Claimant cannot perform any functions he had previously performed processing paperwork and due to his vision he is restricted by his treating Ophthalmologist from driving. Based upon these facts and based on the medical evidence and objective, physical limitations testified by the Claimant and confirmed by his treating doctor's assessment and imposition of limitations, it is determined that Claimant is not capable of the physical

activities required to perform any such position and cannot perform past relevant work., and thus a Step 5 analysis is required 20 CFR 416.920(e).

In the final step of the analysis, the trier of fact must determine if the Claimant's impairment(s) prevent the Claimant from doing other work. 20 CFR 416.920(f). This determination is based upon the Claimant's:

1. residual functional capacity defined simply as "what can you still do despite your limitations?" 20 CFR 416.945;
2. age, education, and work experience, 20 CFR 416.963-965; and
3. the kinds of work that exist in significant numbers in the national economy which the Claimant could perform despite her limitations. 20 CFR 416.966.

The residual functional capacity is what an individual can do despite limitations. All impairments will be considered in addition to ability to meet certain demands of jobs in the national economy. Physical demands, mental demands, sensory requirements and other functions will be evaluated. 20 CFR 416.945(a).

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.

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).

In Step 5, an assessment of the individual's residual functional capacity and age, education, and work experience is considered to determine whether an adjustment to other work can be made. 20 CFR 416.920(4)(v). At the time of hearing, the Claimant was 53 years old and is presently 54 and, thus, considered to be a person approaching advanced age for MA-P purposes. The Claimant has a 11th grade education and has been restricted from use of his hands and feet due to neuropathy and carpal tunnel syndrome. Disability is found if an individual is unable to adjust to other work. *Id.* At this point in the analysis, the burden shifts from the Claimant to the Department to present proof that the Claimant has the residual capacity to substantial gainful employment. 20 CFR 416.960(2); *Richardson v Sec of Health and Human Services*, 735 F2d 962, 964 (CA 6, 1984).

While a vocational expert is not required, a finding supported by substantial evidence that the individual has the vocational qualifications to perform specific jobs is needed to meet the burden. *O'Banner v Sec of Health and Human Services*, 587 F2d 321, 323 (CA 6, 1978). Medical-Vocational guidelines found at 20 CFR Subpart P, Appendix II, may be used to satisfy the burden of proving that the individual can perform specific jobs in the national economy. *Heckler v Campbell*, 461 US 458, 467 (1983); *Kirk v Secretary*, 667 F2d 524, 529 (CA 6, 1981) *cert den* 461 US 957 (1983).

The evaluations and medical opinions of a "treating" physician is "controlling" if it is well-supported by medically acceptable clinical and laboratory diagnostic techniques and is not inconsistent with the other substantial evidence in the case record. 20 CFR§ 404.1527(d)(2), Deference was given by the undersigned to objective medical testing and clinical observations of the Claimant's treating physician who places the Claimant at less than sedentary. After a review of the entire record, including the Claimant's testimony and medical evidence presented, and the objective medical evidence provided by the Claimant's treating physician who places the Claimant at less than sedentary, the total impact caused by the physical impairment suffered by the Claimant must be considered. In doing so, it is found that the combination of the Claimant's physical impairments including diabetes mellitus, diabetic retinopathy, diabetic nerve neuropathy and carpal tunnel syndrome in both hands and his noted deteriorating condition have a major impact on his ability to perform even basic work activities. Accordingly, it is found that the Claimant is unable to perform the full range of activities for even sedentary work as defined in 20 CFR 416.967(a). After review of the entire record, and in consideration of the Claimant's age, education, work experience and residual functional capacity it is found that the Claimant is disabled for purposes of the MA-P program at Step 5.

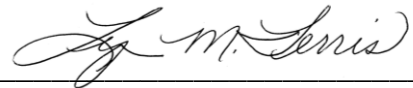
DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that Claimant is medically disabled as of July 2013.

Accordingly, the Department's determination is REVERSED.

THE DEPARTMENT IS ORDERED TO INITIATE THE FOLLOWING, IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEPARTMENT POLICY AND CONSISTENT WITH THIS HEARING DECISION, WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THE DATE OF MAILING OF THIS DECISION AND ORDER:

1. The Department is ORDERED to initiate a review of the application dated July 15, 2013 if not done previously, to determine Claimant's non-medical eligibility.
2. A review of this case shall be set for June 2015.



Lynn M. Ferris
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: June 10, 2014

Date Mailed: June 11, 2014

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.

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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:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]