

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 15-000284
Issue No.: 4009
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: March 31, 2015
County: MONTCALM

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Susanne E. Harris

HEARING DECISION

Following the 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, an in-person hearing was held on March 31, 2015, from Lansing, Michigan. Participants on behalf of the Claimant included the Claimant, [REDACTED] and his Authorized Hearing Representative (AHR) [REDACTED]. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included Eligibility Specialist, [REDACTED].

ISSUE

Whether the Department properly determined that the Claimant was not disabled for the purpose of the State Disability Assistance (SDA) benefit 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 September 28, 2014, the Claimant applied for SDA.
2. On November 24, 2014, the Medical Review Team denied the Claimant's request.
3. On January 6, 2015, the Claimant submitted to the Department a request for hearing.
4. The Claimant is 47 years old.
5. The Claimant completed education through the seventh grade and received his high school equivalency.
6. The Claimant has no employment experience.

7. The Claimant's limitations have lasted for 12 months or more.
8. The Claimant suffers from chronic cervical neck pain, bulging and herniated discs in his neck, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, PTSD, schizophrenia and depression.
9. The Claimant has significant limitations on physical activities involving sitting, standing, walking, bending, lifting, and stooping.
10. The Claimant has significant limitations on understanding, carrying out, and remembering simple instructions; use of judgment; responding appropriately to supervision, co-workers and usual work situations; and dealing with changes in a routine work setting.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

This matter was originally scheduled to be heard on February 18, 2015. On February 11, 2015, the In Michigan Administrative Hearing System received the Claimant's request for an adjournment to have an in-person hearing. On February 13, 2015, Administrative Law Judge Aaron McClintic issued and an Adjournment Order and the matter was rescheduled for March 3, 2015. On February 24, 2015, the Michigan Administrative Hearing System received the Claimant's request for another adjournment. On February 27, 2015, the undersigned Administrative Law Judge issued an Adjournment Order. The matter was rescheduled for March 31, 2015 and a hearing commenced as rescheduled.

After the hearing, the Administrative Law Judge extended the record for additional medical evidence. It was discussed with the Claimant's AHR that a possibility existed that the record could be reviewed and a determination could be made without the additional medical evidence. The Claimant's AHR, when asked directly had no objection to the Administrative Law Judge proceeding in such a manner.

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.

The Department conforms to State statute in administering the SDA program.

2000 PA 294, Sec. 604, of the statute states:

Sec. 604. (1) The department shall operate a state disability assistance program. Except as provided in subsection (3), persons eligible for this program shall include needy citizens of the United States or aliens exempted from the supplemental security income citizenship requirement who are at least 18 years of age or emancipated minors meeting 1 or more of the following requirements:

- (a) A recipient of supplemental security income, social security, or medical assistance due to disability or 65 years of age or older.
- (b) A person with a physical or mental impairment which meets federal supplemental security income disability standards, except that the minimum duration of the disability shall be 90 days. Substance abuse alone is not defined as a basis for eligibility.

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).

In this case, the Claimant suffers from chronic cervical neck pain, bulging and herniated discs in his neck, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, PTSD, schizophrenia and depression. The objective, medical evidence in the record contains an MRI of the cervical spine from February, 2015. The impression was that the Claimant had a herniated disc C5-6 on the right, with mass effect upon the exiting right C6 nerve root. The MRI revealed that the Claimant had a disc bulging at C5-6 with mass effect upon the exiting left C6 nerve root. Spinal canal stenosis at C5-6 was also noted. There was an asymmetric disc bulging to the left C6-7. Cervical degenerative disc disease and spondylosis was also noted. Lastly, uncovertebral and facet degenerative changes, with foraminal narrowing, were noted.

The Medical evidence in the record indicates that the Claimant also suffers from paresthesias and that the shoulder pain is moderate to severe and affects the left upper extremity and both shoulders. The Claimant testified it is due to his bulging discs that he cannot feel his left arm and cannot lift anything with his left hand. The Claimant's testimony is found to be credible and persuasive as it is supported by the objective, medical evidence in the record.

The objective medical evidence in the record also indicates that the Claimant suffers from many mental illnesses. In 2013 his GAF scores fluctuated anywhere from 25 to 55 and a GAF score of less than 30 is indicative of an inability to function in almost all areas.

In this case, this Administrative Law Judge finds that the Claimant may be considered presently disabled at the third step. The Claimant appears to meet or equal listing 1.04 or its equivalent. It is also very likely that the Claimant would meet or equal listing 12.06 as well. This Administrative Law Judge will not continue through the remaining steps of

the assessment. The Claimant's testimony and the medical documentation support the finding that the Claimant meets the requirements of a listing.

Therefore, the Claimant is found to be disabled.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the Claimant is medically disabled as of September, 2014.

Accordingly, the Department's decision is hereby REVERSED and the Department is ORDERED to initiate a review of the application dated September 28, 2014, if not done previously, to determine the Claimant's non-medical eligibility. The Department shall inform the Claimant of the determination in writing. A review of this case shall be set for April, 2016.



Susanne E. Harris
Administrative Law Judge
for Nick Lyon, Interim Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: **4/3/2015**

Date Mailed: **4/3/2015**

SEH/sw

NOTICE OF APPEAL: A party may appeal this Hearing Decision in the circuit court in the county in which he/she resides, or the circuit court in Ingham County, within 30 days of the receipt date.

A party may request a rehearing or reconsideration of this Hearing Decision from the Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS) within 30 days of the mailing date of this Hearing Decision, or MAHS may order a rehearing or reconsideration on its own motion.

MAHS may grant a party's Request for Rehearing or Reconsideration when one of the following exists:

- Newly discovered evidence that existed at the time of the original hearing that could affect the outcome of the original hearing decision;
- Misapplication of manual policy or law in the hearing decision which led to a wrong conclusion;
- Typographical, mathematical or other obvious error in the hearing decision that affects the rights of the client;

- Failure of the ALJ to address in the hearing decision relevant issues raised in the hearing request.

The party requesting a rehearing or reconsideration must specify all reasons for the request. MAHS will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration. A request must be *received* in MAHS within 30 days of the date this Hearing Decision is mailed.

A written request may be faxed or mailed to MAHS. If submitted by fax, the written request must be faxed to (517) 335-6088 and be labeled as follows:

Attention: MAHS Rehearing/Reconsideration Request

If submitted by mail, the written request must be addressed as follows:

Michigan Administrative Hearings
Reconsideration/Rehearing Request
P.O. Box 30639
Lansing, Michigan 48909-8139

cc:

