



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM
Christopher Seppanen
Executive Director

SHELLY EDGERTON
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: July 26, 2016
MAHS Docket No.: 16-004900
Agency No.: [REDACTED]
Petitioner: [REDACTED]

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Susanne E. Harris

HEARING DECISION

Following the Petitioner'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 June 8, 2016, from Lansing, Michigan. The Petitioner, [REDACTED], appeared and testified. The Department of Health and Human Services (Department) was represented by General Services Program Manager, [REDACTED] er and Eligibility Specialist, [REDACTED]

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

After the hearing, this Administrative Law Judge issued an Interim Order Extending the Record for 30 days to afford the Petitioner an opportunity to submit additional medical evidence and psychiatric evidence. The record closed on July 9, 2016 and no additional evidence was received. The following exhibits were offered and admitted into evidence:

Department: A--March 23, 2016, Notice of Case Action.

B--March 22, 2016, Medical Review Team (MRT) denial.

C--Medical Packet.

ISSUE

Whether the Department properly determined that the Petitioner was not disabled for purposes of the State Disability Assistance (SDA) benefit program?

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Administrative Law Judge, based on the competent, material, and substantial evidence on the whole record, finds as material fact:

1. On December 21, 2015, the Petitioner applied for SDA.
2. On March 22, 2016, the Medical Review Team (MRT) denied the Petitioner's SDA application.
3. On March 23, 2016, the Department sent the Petitioner notice that his application was denied.
4. On April 21, 2016, the Petitioner filed a hearing request to contest the Department's negative action.
5. The Petitioner suffers from schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, arthritis, learning disability, hepatitis C, GERD and history of alcohol dependence.
6. The Petitioner broke his ankle approximately six or seven years ago. On November 6, 2015, the Petitioner was seen in the Emergency Department for a broken tibia; it was essentially jammed up into his knee. The Petitioner had a blood alcohol level of 0.158 at the time. The impression was bicondylar fracture of the tibial plateau, fibular head fracture, suspect quadriceps tendon rupture and alcohol abuse with current alcohol intoxication. The Petitioner was unable to perform a seated straight leg raise off of the bed.
7. On November 6, 2015 the Petitioner had an x-ray of his left knee. It revealed a severely comminuted and impacted fracture of the lateral tibial plateau with additional comminuted fracture of the adjacent fibular head. Fracture lines extended to the tibial spine. There is minimal fracture fragment displacement. The joint spaces were well-maintained. A large hemarthrosis with fluid level was noted.
8. At the time of hearing, the Petitioner was still limping and using a cane. The Petitioner has significant limitations with walking, standing, squatting and bending.
9. The Petitioner is a [REDACTED]-year-old man born on [REDACTED]. He is 5'10" and weighs 170 pounds. He has a high school education. He last worked in November, 2015, washing dishes at Applebees.
10. The Petitioner was appealing the denial of Social Security disability at the time of the hearing.
11. The Petitioner's impairments have lasted, or are expected to last, continuously for a period of 90 days or longer.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Department policies are contained in the Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), and Department of Human Services Reference Tables 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 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.

Current legislative amendments to the Act delineate eligibility criteria as implemented by department policy set forth in program manuals. 2004 PA 344, Sec. 604, establishes the State Disability Assistance program. It reads in part:

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 exempt from the Supplemental Security Income citizenship requirement who are at least 18 years of age or emancipated minors meeting one or more of the following requirements:

(b) A person with a physical or mental impairment which meets federal SSI 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.

Specifically, this Act provides minimal cash assistance to individuals with some type of severe, temporary disability which prevents him or her from engaging in substantial gainful work activity for at least ninety (90) days.

A person is disabled for SDA purposes if he or she:

- Receives other specified disability-related benefits or services, see Other Benefits or Services below, or

- Resides in a qualified Special Living Arrangement facility,
or

- Is certified as unable to work due to mental or physical disability for at least 90 days from the onset of the disability.
- Is diagnosed as having Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), see Medical Certification of Disability. BEM 261, pp 1-2 (7/1/2014).

"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. [SDA = 90 day duration].

[As Judge] We are responsible for making the determination or decision about whether you meet the statutory definition of disability. In so doing, we review all of the medical findings and other evidence that support a medical source's statement that you are disabled. 20 CFR 416.927(e).

The Petitioner suffers from schizophrenia, depression, Bipolar disorder, anxiety, arthritis, learning disability, hepatitis C, GERD and history of alcohol dependence. The Petitioner suffered from a previous broken ankle when on November 6, 2015 the Petitioner was seen in the Emergency Department for a broken tibia. The Petitioner had a blood alcohol level of 0.158 at the time. The impression was bicondylar fracture of the tibial plateau, fibular head fracture, suspect quadriceps tendon rupture and alcohol abuse with current alcohol intoxication. The Petitioner was unable to perform a seated straight leg raise off of the bed.

A November 6, 2015, x-ray of his left knee revealed a severely comminuted and impacted fracture of the lateral tibial plateau with additional comminuted fracture of the adjacent fibular head. Fracture lines extended to the tibial spine. There was minimal fracture fragment displacement. The joint spaces were well-maintained. A large hemarthrosis with fluid level was noted. At the time of hearing, the Petitioner was still limping and using a cane. The Petitioner testified that can walk about four blocks with his cane. He can only stand for 20 minutes and cannot squat. Because his left leg is so weak he needs to hang onto something to be able to even bend at the waist.

The Petitioner's complaints and allegations concerning his impairments and limitations, when considered in light of all objective medical evidence, as well as the record as a whole, reflect an individual who is so impaired as to be incapable of engaging in any substantial gainful activity on a regular and continuing basis.

The credible testimony and medical records submitted at hearing verify the Petitioner was legally disabled for ninety (90) days. As such, the Department's denial of SDA pursuant to Petitioner's December 21, 2015 SDA application cannot be upheld.

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 the Petitioner disabled for purposes of the SDA benefit program.

DECISION AND ORDER

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 shall process the Petitioner's December 21, 2015 application, and shall award him all the benefits he may be entitled to receive, as long as she meets the remaining financial and non-financial eligibility factors.
2. The Department shall review the Petitioner's medical condition for improvement in January, 2017, unless his Social Security Administration disability status is approved by that time.
3. The Department shall obtain updated medical evidence from the Petitioner's treating physicians, physical therapists, pain clinic notes, etc. regarding his continued treatment, progress and prognosis at review.

It is SO ORDERED.



SH/nr

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

NOTICE OF APPEAL: A party may appeal this Order in circuit court within 30 days of the receipt date. A copy of the circuit court appeal must be filed with the Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS).

A party may request a rehearing or reconsideration of this Order if the request is received by MAHS within 30 days of the date the Order was issued. The party requesting a rehearing or reconsideration must provide the specific reasons for the request. MAHS will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration.

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

DHHS

[REDACTED]

Petitioner

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