



RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

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

SHELLY EDGERTON  
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: November 28, 2016  
MAHS Docket No.: 16-013564

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Carmen G. Fahie**

**HEARING DECISION**

Following 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 October 18, 2016, from Lansing, Michigan. The Petitioner was represented by himself and his mother, [REDACTED]. The Department of Health and Human Services (Department) was represented by [REDACTED], Family Independence Manager.

**ISSUE**

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

**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 October 30, 2015, the Petitioner applied for SDA.
2. On August 1, 2016, the Medical Review Team (MRT) denied the Petitioner's application for SDA is denied per BEM 261 because the nature and severity of the Petitioner's impairment's would not preclude work activity at the above stated level for 90 days.
3. On August 5, 2016, the Department Caseworker sent the Petitioner a notice that his application was denied.

4. On September 15, 2016, the Department received a hearing request from the Petitioner, contesting the Department's negative action.
5. The Petitioner is a [REDACTED] year-old man whose date of birth is [REDACTED]. The Petitioner is [REDACTED] tall and weighs [REDACTED] pounds. The Petitioner completed High School and 2 years of college in management. The Petitioner can read and write and do basic math. The Petitioner is currently employed as a seasonal worker starting in April 2016. He was last employed as a seasonal worker in September 2015. His previous employment was as a factory worker at the medium level, delivery driver at the heavy level, cashier at the light level, truck driver, and gas station attendant.
6. The Petitioner's alleged impairments are a-fibrillation in October 2015, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, and a [REDACTED] heart surgery.
7. The Petitioner was seen by his treating physician for a follow up to his cardiomyopathy on [REDACTED]. His current diagnosis was cardiomyopathy, obesity, hypertension, shortness of breath, abnormal electrocardiogram, and cardiac murmur. He is staying active and just joined a gym. He has finished his cardiac rehabilitation. He has changed his diet significantly. The Petitioner had an essentially normal physical examination. His current medication regimen was continued with a follow up in 6 months. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 45-46.
8. The Petitioner successfully completed his cardiac rehabilitation from [REDACTED] through [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 22-26.

### **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 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 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 Petitioner does not have a severe medically determinable impairment or combination of impairments, the Petitioner is not disabled. If the Petitioner 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 Petitioner's residual functional capacity. 20 CFR 404.1520(e). An individual's residual functional capacity is his ability to do physical and mental work

activities on a sustained basis despite limitations from his impairments. In making this finding, the trier must consider all of the Petitioner'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 Petitioner has the residual functional capacity to perform the requirements of his past relevant work. 20 CFR 404.1520(f). The term past relevant work means work performed (either as the Petitioner 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 Petitioner has the residual functional capacity to do past relevant work, then the Petitioner is not disabled. If the Petitioner 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).

Here, the Petitioner has satisfied requirements as set forth in steps one and two of the sequential evaluation. However, the Petitioner's impairments do not meet a listing as set forth in Appendix 1, 20 CFR 416.926 for step 3. Therefore, vocational factors will be considered to determine the Petitioner's residual functional capacity to do relevant work and past relevant work.

In the present case, the Petitioner was seen by his treating physician for a follow up to his cardiomyopathy on March 18, 2016. His current diagnosis was cardiomyopathy, obesity, hypertension, shortness of breath, abnormal electrocardiogram, and cardiac murmur. He is staying active and just joined a gym. He has finished his cardiac rehabilitation. He has changed his diet significantly. The Petitioner had an essentially normal physical examination. His current medication regiment was continued with a follow up in 6 months. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 45-46.

The Petitioner successfully completed his cardiac rehabilitation from [REDACTED] through [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 22-26.

It is the finding of this Administrative Law Judge, based upon the medical evidence and objective, physical and psychological findings that the Petitioner testified that he does perform all of his daily living activities. The Petitioner does feel that his condition has not worsened because of he was able to go back to work in April 2016. The Petitioner stated that he does not have any mental impairments. The Petitioner does not or has ever smoked cigarettes, drunk alcohol, or used illegal and illicit drugs. The Petitioner did feel there was any work he could do since April 2016 of working at [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

At Step 4, this Administrative Law Judge finds that the Petitioner has established that he cannot perform any of his prior work for a closed period of time from October 2016 through March 2016. He was is currently employed as a seasonal worker starting in April 2016. He was last employed as a seasonal worker in September 2015. His previous employment was as a factory worker at the medium level, delivery driver at the heavy level, cashier at the light level, truck driver, and gas station attendant. He did not finish his cardiac rehabilitation until March 2016. Therefore, the Petitioner is not disqualified from receiving disability at Step 4. The Petitioner was not capable of performing his past work. However, the Administrative Law Judge will still proceed through the sequential evaluation process to determine whether or not the Petitioner has the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in his prior jobs.

The objective medical evidence on the record is sufficient that the Petitioner lacks the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in him previous employment or that he is physically unable to do any tasks demanded of him. The Petitioner's testimony as to his limitation indicates his limitations are exertional. Therefore, the Administrative Law Judge finds that the Petitioner could not perform sedentary work and that the Petitioner does meet the definition of disabled under the SDA program for a closed period of time of October 2015 through March 2016.

#### **DECISION AND ORDER**

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 Petitioner disabled for purposes of the SDA benefit program. The Petitioner could not perform sedentary work and that the Petitioner does meet the definition of disabled under the SDA program for a closed period of time of October 2015 through March 2016.

Accordingly, the Department's determination is **REVERSED**. The Department is ordered to redetermine eligibility for SDA based on his October 30, 2015 SDA application to March 2015 where he went back to work in April 2016.



*Carmen G. Fahie*

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**Carmen G. Fahie**

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

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]