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GOVERNOR

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

SHELLY EDGERTON
DIRECTOR

Date Mailed: September 29, 2016
MAHS Docket No.: 16-010343

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ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Vicki Armstrong

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 - 431.250; and 45 CFR 205.10. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on September 14, 2016, from Lansing, Michigan. Petitioner and his father, ██████████ personally appeared and testified.

The Department of Health and Human Services (Department) was represented by Hearing Facilitator ██████████ ██████████ and Eligibility Specialist ██████████ ██████████. ██████████ testified on behalf of the Department. The Department submitted Exhibits A (pages 1-12), B (pages 1-2) and C (pages 1-174) which were admitted. The record was closed at the conclusion of the hearing.

ISSUE

Whether the Department properly determined that 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 February 19, 2016, Petitioner applied for SDA. [Dept. Exh. A, pp 1-12].
2. On June 23, 2016, the Medical Review Team found Petitioner was not disabled. [Dept. Exh. C, pp 1-29].
3. On July 7, 2016, the Department issued a Notice of Case Action to Petitioner informing him that he had been denied SDA benefits. [Dept. Exh. B, pp 1-2].

4. On July 13, 2016, Petitioner submitted a Hearing Request contesting the Department's actions.
5. Petitioner is diagnosed with depression, bipolar disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, insomnia, vertigo, chronic pain, torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), torn medial collateral ligament (MCL), torn meniscus, pinched nerves in lower back and pinched discs in lower back.
6. On January 6, 2016, Petitioner's psychiatrist submitted a letter to the Department that Petitioner would benefit from Social Security disability due to his permanent bipolar disorder and inability to work. [Dept. Exh. C, p 10].
7. On June 21, 2016, Petitioner underwent an Adult Mental Status Examination on behalf of the Department. Petitioner had two previous psychiatric hospitalizations, the first when he ■-years old. Petitioner reported he had attempted to work a number of jobs, mostly as an iron worker and then less demanding jobs without success. The psychologist noted that Petitioner does not respond well to authority and had pervasive anger/irritability issues and posttraumatic stress problems. He also had deficits in immediate and remote memory. The psychologist opined that Petitioner had irregular sleep habits that could impede his employability. [Dept. Exh. C, p 84-88].
8. Petitioner is a ■-year-old man born on ■■■■■■■■■■. He is 5'9" and weighs 195 pounds. He has a high school education. He last worked in July, 2015.
9. Petitioner was appealing the denial of Social Security disability at the time of the hearing.
10. 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 Health and 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).

Petitioner is diagnosed with a history of depression, bipolar disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, insomnia, vertigo, chronic pain, torn ACL, torn MCL, torn meniscus, pinched nerves and pinched discs in his lower back.

In this case, Petitioner has had a known psychiatric disorder since the age of [REDACTED] when he was first psychiatrically hospitalized. Petitioner's treating psychiatrist opined that Petitioner has permanent bipolar disorder and is unable to work. Because [REDACTED] treating psychiatrist's opinion is well supported by medically acceptable clinical and laboratory diagnostic techniques, it has controlling weight. 20 CFR 404.1527(d)(2).

Petitioner's complaints and allegations concerning his impairments and limitations, when considered in light of all the 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 Petitioner was legally disabled continuously for a period of 90 days or longer. As such, the Department's denial of SDA pursuant to Petitioner's February 19, 2016, 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, finds Petitioner disabled for purposes of the SDA benefit program.

DECISION AND ORDER

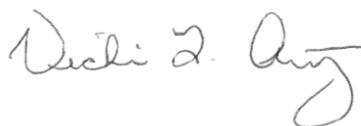
Accordingly, the Department's determination is **REVERSED**.

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 Petitioner's February 19, 2016, application, and shall award him all the benefits he may be entitled to receive, as long as he meets the remaining financial and non-financial eligibility factors.
2. The Department shall review Petitioner's medical condition for improvement in October, 2017, unless his Social Security Administration disability status is approved by that time.

3. The Department shall obtain updated medical evidence from Petitioner's treating physicians, physical therapists, pain clinic notes, etc. regarding his continued treatment, progress and prognosis at review.

It is **SO ORDERED**.



Vicki Armstrong
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

