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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS  
MICHIGAN OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES

ORLENE HAWKS  
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], MI  
[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: June 13, 2022  
MOAHR Docket No.: 22-000753  
Agency No.: [REDACTED]  
Petitioner: [REDACTED]

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Landis Lain**

### **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; 7 CFR 273.15 to 273.18; 42 CFR 431.200 to 431.250; 42 CFR 438.400 to 438.424; 45 CFR 99.1 to 99.33; and 45 CFR 205.10; and Mich Admin Code, R 792.11002. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on June 7, 2022, from Lansing, Michigan. Petitioner [REDACTED] self-represented at the hearing. The Department of Health and Human Services (Department or Respondent) was represented by Tamaris Steward.

Respondent's Exhibit A pages 1-308 were admitted as evidence.

### **ISSUE**

Did the Department properly deny Petitioner's application for State Disability Assistance (SDA)?

### **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 [REDACTED], 2021, Petitioner filed an application for State Disability Assistance (SDA) benefits alleging disability.
- (2) Petitioner receives Medical Assistance (MA) benefits and Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits.
- (3) On February 14, 2022, the Medical Review Team denied Petitioner's application stating that evidence continues to support finding to perform other work.

- (4) On February 14, 2022, the department caseworker sent Petitioner notice that the application was denied.
- (5) On February 28, 2022, Petitioner filed a request for a hearing to contest the Department's negative action.
- (6) On March 4, 2022, the Michigan Administrative Hearing System received a hearing summary and attached documentation.
- (7) On June 7, 2022, the hearing was held.
- (8) Petitioner is a [REDACTED]-year-old man whose date of birth is [REDACTED], 1978. He is [REDACTED]' tall and weighs [REDACTED] lbs. Petitioner attended 10<sup>th</sup> grade and has no GED.
- (9) Petitioner last worked in 2020 as a dietary aide. He worked as a custodian and retail for about 12 years.
- (10) Petitioner alleges as disabling impairments: depression, anxiety, manic depression, and hypertension.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

The regulations governing the hearing and appeal process for applicants and recipients of public assistance in Michigan are found in the Michigan Administrative Code, MAC R 400.901-400.951. An opportunity for a hearing shall be granted to an applicant who requests a hearing because his or her claim for assistance has been denied. MAC R 400.903(1). Clients have the right to contest a department decision affecting eligibility or benefit levels whenever it is believed that the decision is incorrect. The department will provide an administrative hearing to review the decision and determine the appropriateness of that decision. BAM 600.

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

Pursuant to Federal Rule 42 CFR 435.540, the Department of Human Services uses the federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) policy in determining eligibility for disability under the Medical Assistance program. 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 is 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.

If an individual is working and the work is substantial gainful activity, the individual is not disabled regardless of the medical condition, education and work experience. 20 CFR 416.920(c).

If the impairment or combination of impairments do not significantly limit physical or mental ability to do basic work activities, it is not a severe impairment(s) and disability does not exist. Age, education and work experience will not be considered. 20 CFR 416.920.

Statements about pain or other symptoms do not alone establish disability. There must be medical signs and laboratory findings which demonstrate a medical impairment. 20 CFR 416.929(a).

...Medical reports should include:

- (1) Medical history;
- (2) Clinical findings (such as the results of physical or mental status examinations);
- (3) Laboratory findings (such as blood pressure, X-rays);
- (4) Diagnosis (statement of disease or injury based on its signs and symptoms). 20 CFR 416.913(b).

The person claiming a physical, or mental, disability has the burden to establish it through the use of competent medical evidence from qualified medical sources such as clinical/laboratory findings, diagnosis/prescribed treatment, prognosis for a recovery and/or medical assessment of ability to do work-related activities, or ability to reason

and to make appropriate mental adjustments, if a mental disability is being alleged. 20 CFR 416.913.

In determining disability under the law, the ability to work is measured. An individual's functional capacity for doing basic work activities is evaluated. If an individual has the ability to perform basic work activities without significant limitations, he or she is not considered disabled. 20 CFR 416.994(b)(1)(iv).

Basic work activities are the abilities and aptitudes necessary to do most jobs. Examples of these include:

- (1) Physical functions such as walking, standing, sitting, lifting, pushing, pulling, reaching, carrying, or handling;
- (2) Capacities for seeing, hearing, and speaking;
- (3) Understanding, carrying out, and remembering simple instructions;
- (4) Use of judgment;
- (5) Responding appropriately to supervision, co-workers and usual work situations; and
- (6) Dealing with changes in a routine work setting. 20 CFR 416.921(b).

Medical findings must allow a determination of (1) the nature and limiting effects of your impairment(s) for any period in question; (2) the probable duration of the impairment; and (3) the residual functional capacity to do work-related physical and mental activities. 20 CFR 416.913(d).

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

All of the evidence relevant to the claim, including medical opinions, is reviewed and findings are made. 20 CFR 416.927(c).

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).

A statement by a medical source finding that an individual is "disabled" or "unable to work" does not mean that disability exists for the purposes of the program. 20 CFR 416.927(e).

When determining disability, the federal regulations require that several considerations be analyzed in sequential order. If disability can be ruled out at any step, analysis of the next step is not required. These steps are:

1. Does the client perform Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)? If yes, the client is ineligible for MA. If no, the analysis continues to Step 2. 20 CFR 416.920(b).
2. Does the client have a severe impairment that has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more or result in death? If no, the client is ineligible for MA. If yes, the analysis continues to Step 3. 20 CFR 416.920(c).
3. Does the impairment appear on a special listing of impairments or are the client's symptoms, signs, and laboratory findings at least equivalent in severity to the set of medical findings specified for the listed impairment? If no, the analysis continues to Step 4. If yes, MA is approved. 20 CFR 416.290(d).
4. Can the client do the former work that he/she performed within the last 15 years? If yes, the client is ineligible for MA. If no, the analysis continues to Step 5. 20 CFR 416.920(e).
5. Does the client have the Residual Functional Capacity (RFC) to perform other work according to the guidelines set forth at 20 CFR 404, Subpart P, Appendix 2, Sections 200.00-204.00? If yes, the analysis ends and the client is ineligible for MA. If no, MA is approved. 20 CFR 416.920(f).

At Step 1, Petitioner is not engaged in substantial gainful activity and has not worked since 2018. Petitioner is not disqualified from receiving disability at Step 1.

The subjective and objective medical evidence on the record indicates:

Petitioner testified on the record that he lives alone, and Section 8 pays the rent. He is single with no children under 18 and no income. He receives Medical Assistance Program and Food Assistance Program benefits. Petitioner stated that he does not have a driver's license. Petitioner alleges he does vacuum, dishes, makes his bed and

does laundry. Petitioner can stand for 10 minutes and can sit for unlimited time. He can walk one block. He can shower and dress himself slowly. Petitioner is unable to touch his toes. Petitioner can carry 50 pounds. Petitioner smokes Black and Mild (cigarettes) and marijuana. The doctor has told him to quit. His pain is a 7 out of 10 with no pain medication. With pain medication his pain is a 3-4.

This Administrative Law Judge did consider the entire record in making this decision.

Medical documentation indicates a non-severe condition.

A January 26, 2022, health examination report indicates that he is [REDACTED] inches tall and weigh [REDACTED] lbs. His blood pressure was 142/104 and 14/95. His pulse was 98 and respirations are 16. Petitioner has 20/20 vision in both eyes uncorrected. Head is normocephalic. Pupils are equal and reactive to light and accommodation. Fundi not visualized. Neck is supple. No thyromegaly or lymphadenopathy. Carotid pulses are normal. No bruit. JVD not elevated. Chest is symmetrical. Breathing is vesicular. No rales or rhonchi. Good air bilaterally. Percussion note is resonant. Heart sounds first and second normal. No gallop or murmur. Apex beat is in the fifth intercostal space at midclavicular line. Abdomen is soft. No palpable mass. No tenderness. No hernia, no ascites, no bruit. No aneurysm felt. Petitioner was fully conscious and oriented. Cranial nerves II-XII normal. Motor system normal. Plantar are both down going. DTRs are 2+. No sensory or motor deficit. Petitioner is ambulatory without any walking aid. No tendency for lurching, swaying or falling. He is unable to touch his toes but able to squat completely. Arterial pulses are normal. No varicose veins or edema of feet. No cyanosis or clubbing. Lumbar area is tender. Muscle spasm present. Straight leg-raising test is negative bilaterally. Handgrip is 90 pounds on the right and 80 on the left. Tinel's and Phalen's signs are negative. Petitioner is able to open a jar, button clothing, write legibly, pick up a coin and tie shoelaces with either hand. He was seen at [REDACTED] on April 23, 2021, for umbilical hernia; no surgery was recommended. Petitioner has somewhat uncontrolled hypertension. He has gained 30 pounds through lack of activity. He has depression, anxiety and sleeping problems. He has post-traumatic stress disorder because two of his children were murdered. He has lumbar degenerative disc disease by history and decreased range of motion of the lumbar spine on clinical examination. He had an umbilical hernia which is reducible. (Pages 210-212)

A December 20, 2021, Psychiatric/Psychological Medical Report indicates that Petitioner was oriented to person, place and time. He could repeat 3 digits forward and 2 backwards. He could recall 0 of 3 objects three minutes later. He named current and past presidents as Biden and Trump. He stated his date of birth correctly. He was diagnosed with major depressive disorder, recurrent, panic disorder and post traumatic stress disorder. His prognosis is fair. He is able to manage benefits funds. (Pages 219-223)

A February 18, 2021, medical report indicates that Petitioner was diagnosed with an umbilical hernia. The liver demonstrates normal uniform echotexture. No focal hepatic parenchymal lesion. The gall bladder is normal. The pancreas is sonographically normal. The right kidney shows normal appearance. The hernia contain a peristalsing bowel loop. There was a normal appearance of right upper abdominal structures. (Page 82)

A January 5, 2021, Disability Determination Explanation medical evaluation indicates that Petitioner retains the residual functional capacity to perform a full range of work at all exertional levels but with the following nonexertional limitations: Petitioner cannot climb ladders, ropes or scaffolds. He cannot work at unprotected heights or in the vicinity of uncovered, unguarded moving machinery. Petitioner can perform simple routine tasks. He can understand, remember and carry out simple instructions. Petitioner must be in a low stress environment, defined as only minimal changes in the work setting and only simple work-related decision-making. Petitioner can never interact with the public but can occasionally interact with co-workers and supervisors. Petitioner would be off task no more than 10% of the workday. (Page 19)

At Step 2, Petitioner has the burden of proof of establishing that he has a severely restrictive physical or mental impairment that has lasted or is expected to last for the duration of at least 12 months. There is insufficient objective clinical medical evidence in the record that Petitioner suffers a severely restrictive physical or mental impairment. Petitioner has reports of pain in multiple areas of his body; however, there are no corresponding clinical findings that support the reports of symptoms and limitations made by Petitioner. There are insufficient laboratory or x-ray findings listed in the file which support Petitioner's contention of disability. The clinical impression is that Petitioner is stable. There is no medical finding that Petitioner has any muscle atrophy or trauma, abnormality, or injury that is consistent with a deteriorating condition. In short, Petitioner has restricted himself from tasks associated with occupational functioning based upon his reports of pain (symptoms) rather than medical findings. Reported symptoms are an insufficient basis upon which a finding that Petitioner has met the evidentiary burden of proof can be made. This Administrative Law Judge finds that the medical record is insufficient to establish that Petitioner has a severely restrictive physical impairment.

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, App. 1, 12.00(C).

There is insufficient objective medical/psychiatric evidence in the record indicating Petitioner suffers severe mental limitations. There is a mental residual functional capacity assessment in the record which indicates that Petitioner is markedly limited in

most areas. However, there is insufficient evidence contained in the file of depression or a cognitive dysfunction that is so severe that it would prevent Petitioner from working at any job. Petitioner was oriented to time, person and place during the hearing. Petitioner was able to answer all the questions at the hearing and was responsive to the questions. The evidentiary record is insufficient to find that Petitioner suffers a severely restrictive mental impairment. For these reasons, this Administrative Law Judge finds that Petitioner has failed to meet his burden of proof at Step 2. Petitioner must be denied benefits at this step based upon his failure to meet the evidentiary burden.

If Petitioner had not been denied at Step 2, the analysis would proceed to Step 3 where the medical evidence of Petitioner's condition does not give rise to a finding that he would meet a statutory listing in the code of federal regulations.

At Step 3, the medical evidence of Petitioner's condition does not give rise to a finding that Petitioner would meet a statutory listing in the code of federal regulations. This Administrative Law Judge finds that Petitioner's medical record does not support a finding that Petitioner's impairment(s) is a "listed impairment" or equal to a listed impairment. See Appendix 1 of Subpart P of 20 CFR Part 404, Part A.

If Petitioner had not already been denied at Step 2, this Administrative Law Judge would have to deny his again at Step 4 based upon his ability to perform his past relevant work. There is no evidence upon which this Administrative Law Judge could base a finding that Petitioner is unable to perform work in which he has been engaged in the past. Therefore, if Petitioner had not already been denied at Step 2, he would be denied again at Step 4.

The Administrative Law Judge will continue to proceed through the sequential evaluation process to determine whether or not Petitioner has the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in his prior jobs.

At Step 5, the burden of proof shifts to the Department to establish that Petitioner does not have residual functional capacity.

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).

Petitioner has submitted insufficient objective medical evidence that he lacks the residual functional capacity to perform some other less strenuous tasks than in his prior employment or that he is physically unable to do light or sedentary tasks if demanded of him. Petitioner's activities of daily living do not appear to be very limited, and he should be able to perform light or sedentary work even with his impairments. Petitioner has failed to provide the necessary objective medical evidence to establish that he has a severe impairment or combination of impairments which prevent him from performing any level of work for a period of 12 months. Petitioner's testimony as to his limitations indicates that he should be able to perform light or sedentary work.

There is insufficient objective medical/psychiatric evidence contained in the file of depression or a cognitive dysfunction that is so severe that it would prevent Petitioner from working at any job. Petitioner was able to answer all the questions at the hearing and was responsive to the questions. Petitioner was oriented to time, person and place during the hearing. Petitioner's complaints of pain, while profound and credible, are out of proportion to the objective medical evidence contained in the file as it relates to Petitioner's ability to perform work. Therefore, this Administrative Law Judge finds that the objective medical evidence on the record does not establish that Petitioner has no residual functional capacity. Petitioner is disqualified from receiving disability at Step 5 based upon the fact that he has not established by objective medical evidence that he cannot perform light or sedentary work even with his impairments. Under the Medical-Vocational guidelines, an individual (age 43), with a less than high school education and an unskilled work history who is limited to light work, is not considered disabled.

If an individual fails to follow prescribed treatment which would be expected to restore their ability to engage in substantial activity without good cause there will not be a finding of disability.... 20 CFR 416.994(b)(4)(iv).

Careful consideration has been given to Petitioner's allegations and symptoms. Petitioner has established that her mental condition could cause problems with daily and work functioning. However, the totality of the evidence does not support total disability. Petitioner's medically determinable impairments could reasonably be expected to produce alleged symptoms, Petitioner's statements concerning the intensity, persistence and limiting effects of these symptoms do not result in disability when compared to the limitations suggested by the objective medical evidence contained in the file.

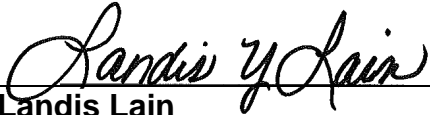
The Department has established by the necessary competent, material and substantial evidence on the record that it was acting in compliance with department policy when it determined that Petitioner was not eligible to receive State Disability Assistance.

**DECISION AND ORDER**

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the department has appropriately established on the record that it was acting in compliance with department policy when it denied Petitioner's application for State Disability Assistance benefits based upon disability. Petitioner should be able to perform a wide range of light or sedentary work even with her impairments. The department has established its case by a preponderance of the evidence.

Accordingly, the department's decision is **AFFIRMED**.

LL/ml

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Landis Lain**  
Administrative Law Judge

**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 Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules (MOAHR).

A party may request a rehearing or reconsideration of this Order if the request is received by MOAHR 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. MOAHR will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration.

A written request may be mailed or faxed to MOAHR. If submitted by fax, the written request must be faxed to (517) 763-0155; Attention: MOAHR Rehearing/Reconsideration Request.

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

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

**Via-Electronic Mail :**

**DHHS**  
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**Interested Parties**  
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**Petitioner**

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