

# MEDICAID DISABILITY MANUAL

## 1. **Presence of a Medically Determinable Impairment**

Before evaluating the effect of pain and symptoms on an individual's ability to work, it must be shown that:

- a. the individual has a medically determinable physical and/or mental impairment(s) established by medically acceptable clinical or laboratory diagnostic techniques; and
- b. the medically determinable impairment(s) could reasonably be expected to produce the alleged pain.

When medical findings do not substantiate any physical impairment capable of producing the alleged pain or symptoms, the possibility of a mental impairment as the basis for the pain should be considered.

In the absence of objective findings of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment, disability cannot be established regardless of the degree of pain alleged.

## 2. **Symptoms and Pain and the Sequential Evaluation Process**

Once a medically determinable physical and/or mental impairment is documented, symptoms and pain must be considered in determining severity and at each step of the Sequential Evaluation Process.

- a. **Evaluating Severity** - To be considered severe, the individual's impairment or combination of impairments must significantly limit his/her ability to do basic work activities.

When pain is alleged and the documented impairment(s) could reasonably be expected to produce the pain, any allegations of pain-related limitations must be considered in evaluating severity. The presence of the alleged pain-related limitations may substantiate the conclusion that one or more basic work activities are affected to more than a minimal degree and that the impairment(s) is severe.

- b. **Determining Meets or Equals** - A finding of disabled is made on a medical basis alone when an impairment(s) meets a listing in Appendix I or is medically the equivalent of a listed impairment. Some listings include pain as a criterion (e.g., Listings 1.02 and 5.06 B3). Under these listings, if the individual