

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

MATTHEW D HIGENS
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 15A-UI-13214-B2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

DM PLASTICS ACQUISITION LLC
Employer

OC: 11/01/15
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.4-3 – Able and Available

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated November 24, 2015 (reference 02) which held claimant not able and available for work. After due notice, a hearing was scheduled for and held on December 16, 2015. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated by Nina Ramsey. Employer's Exhibits One and Two and Claimant's Exhibits A through F were admitted into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue in this matter is whether claimant is able and available for work.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant is currently undergoing treatments at this time which make it such that he is not able and available to work. Claimant was separated from his work on October 28, 2015; as claimant was not, at that time, able to work.

Claimant last worked for employer on May 8, 2015. Claimant was covered under FMLA for his absences from June 17, 2015 through September 9, 2015. Subsequent to the end of FMLA claimant has pursued other avenues as he is not able to return to work. Claimant's psychiatrist was unable to state a definitive return date when asked by employer on or around October 22, 2015.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code § 96.4-3 provides:

An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the department finds that:

3. The individual is able to work, is available for work, and is earnestly and actively seeking work. This subsection is waived if the individual is deemed partially unemployed, while employed at the individual's regular job, as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "b", unnumbered paragraph 1, or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "c". The work search requirements

of this subsection and the disqualification requirement for failure to apply for, or to accept suitable work of section 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(1)a provides:

Benefits eligibility conditions. For an individual to be eligible to receive benefits the department must find that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work. The individual bears the burden of establishing that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work.

(1) Able to work. An individual must be physically and mentally able to work in some gainful employment, not necessarily in the individual's customary occupation, but which is engaged in by others as a means of livelihood.

a. Illness, injury or pregnancy. Each case is decided upon an individual basis, recognizing that various work opportunities present different physical requirements. A statement from a medical practitioner is considered prima facie evidence of the physical ability of the individual to perform the work required. A pregnant individual must meet the same criteria for determining ableness as do all other individuals.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(35) provides:

Availability disqualifications. The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

(35) Where the claimant is not able to work and is under the care of a physician and has not been released as being able to work.

Inasmuch as the treating physician has not released the claimant to return to work, the claimant has not established the ability to work. Benefits are withheld until such time as the claimant obtains a full medical release to return to work.

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated November 24, 2015 (reference 02) is affirmed. Claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits at this time.

Blair A. Bennett
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bab/can