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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

MARVIN D. PERNELL o/b/o V.I.P.,)	NO. EDCV 07-1604-MAN
)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	MEMORANDUM OPINION
v.)	
)	AND ORDER
MICHAEL J. ASTRUE,)	
Commissioner of Social Security,)	
)	
Defendant.)	
_____)	

Plaintiff filed a Complaint on December 17, 2007, seeking review of the denial by the Social Security Commissioner ("Commissioner") of plaintiff's application for supplemental security income ("SSI"). On January 11, 2008, the parties consented to proceed before the undersigned United States Magistrate Judge pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(c). On September 18, 2008, the parties filed a Joint Stipulation in which: plaintiff seeks an order reversing the Commissioner's decision and awarding benefits or, in the alternative, remanding the matter for a new administrative hearing; and defendant requests that the Commissioner's decision be affirmed. The Court has taken the parties Joint Stipulation under submission without oral argument.

1 impairment or combination of impairments that meets, medically equals,
2 or functionally equals one of the listed impairments in 20 C.F.R. Part
3 404, Subpart P, Appendix 1. (*Id.*)
4

5 The ALJ found, in reliance on the opinion of the medical expert
6 psychologist, Michael E. Kania, Ph.D., that the opinion of plaintiff's
7 treating psychologist, Wolfgang Klebel, Ph.D., was "based solely upon
8 what [plaintiff's] father told the doctor and not on any independent
9 objective findings or psychological testing." (A.R. 22.) The ALJ
10 further found that the statements of plaintiff's father concerning the
11 "intensity, persistence and limiting effects of [plaintiff's] symptoms
12 are not entirely credible." (A.R. 20.)
13

14 Based on the ALJ's assessment of the evidence and in reliance on
15 the opinions of the two medical experts, Dr. Kania and Colin P. Hubbard,
16 M.D., F.A.A.P., the ALJ concluded that plaintiff has not been disabled,
17 as defined in the Social Security Act, since September 28, 2004, the
18 date the application was filed. (A.R. 27.)
19

20 **STANDARD OF REVIEW**
21

22 Under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g), this Court reviews the Commissioner's
23 decision to determine whether it is free from legal error and supported
24 by substantial evidence in the record as a whole. Orn v. Astrue, 495
25 F.3d 625, 630 (9th Cir. 2007). Substantial evidence is "'such relevant
26 evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a
27 conclusion.'" *Id.* (citation omitted). The "evidence must be more than
28 a mere scintilla but not necessarily a preponderance." Connett v.

1 Barnhart, 340 F.3d 871, 873 (9th Cir. 2003). While inferences from the
2 record can constitute substantial evidence, only those “‘reasonably
3 drawn from the record’” will suffice. Widmark v. Barnhart, 454 F.3d
4 1063, 1066 (9th Cir. 2006)(citation omitted).

5
6 Although this Court cannot substitute its discretion for that of
7 the Commissioner, the Court nonetheless must review the record as a
8 whole, “weighing both the evidence that supports and the evidence that
9 detracts from the [Commissioner’s] conclusion.” Desrosiers v. Sec’y of
10 Health and Human Servs., 846 F.2d 573, 576 (9th Cir. 1988); *see also*
11 Jones v. Heckler, 760 F.2d 993, 995 (9th Cir. 1985). “The ALJ is
12 responsible for determining credibility, resolving conflicts in medical
13 testimony, and for resolving ambiguities.” Andrews v. Shalala, 53 F.3d
14 1035, 1039-40 (9th Cir. 1995).

15
16 The Court will uphold the Commissioner’s decision when the evidence
17 is susceptible to more than one rational interpretation. Burch v.
18 Barnhart, 400 F.3d 676, 679 (9th Cir. 2005). However, the Court may
19 review only the reasons stated by the ALJ in his decision “and may not
20 affirm the ALJ on a ground upon which he did not rely.” Orn, 495 F.3d
21 at 630; *see also* Connett, 340 F.3d at 874. The Court will not reverse
22 the Commissioner’s decision if it is based on harmless error, which
23 exists only when it is “clear from the record that an ALJ’s error was
24 ‘inconsequential to the ultimate nondisability determination.’” Robbins
25 v. Soc. Sec. Admin., 466 F.3d 880, 885 (9th Cir. 2006)(*quoting* Stout v.
26 Comm’r, 454 F.3d 1050, 1055-56 (9th Cir. 2006)); *see also* Burch, 400
27 F.3d at 679.

1 DISCUSSION

2
3 Plaintiff alleges the following three issues: (1) whether the ALJ
4 properly considered the treating psychologist's opinion; (2) whether the
5 ALJ properly considered the lay witness statements of plaintiff's
6 father; and (3) whether the ALJ properly considered the type, dosage,
7 effectiveness, and side effects of plaintiff's medication. (Joint
8 Stipulation ("Joint Stip.") at 2-3.)
9

10 I. The Reason Articulated By The ALJ For Disregarding The Opinion Of
11 Plaintiff's Treating Psychologist Is Not Legitimate, And The Record
12 Must Be Developed Further Regarding Plaintiff's Psychological
13 Limitations And Seizure Disorder.
14

15 A treating physician's conclusions "must be given substantial
16 weight." Embrey v. Bowen, 849 F.2d 418, 422 (9th Cir. 1988). "Even if
17 the treating doctor's opinion is contradicted by another doctor, the ALJ
18 may not reject this opinion without providing specific and legitimate
19 reasons supported by substantial evidence in the record." Orn, 495 F.3d
20 at 633 (*internal punctuation and citation omitted*); see also McAllister
21 v. Sullivan, 888 F.2d 599, 602 (9th Cir. 1989) ("broad and vague"
22 reasons for rejecting the treating physician's opinion do not suffice).
23 A licensed psychologist is an acceptable source of medical evidence and
24 a treating psychologist's opinion is given the same weight as that of a
25 treating physician. See 20 C.F.R. § 416.913(a)(2) (licensed or
26 certified psychologists are acceptable medical sources, like licenced
27 physicians (20 C.F.R. § 416.913(a)(1)), upon whose opinion a disability
28 finding may be based).

1 In Social Security cases, the law is well-settled that the ALJ has
2 an affirmative "'duty to fully and fairly develop the record and to
3 assure that the claimant's interests are considered . . . even when the
4 claimant is represented by counsel.'" Celaya v. Halter, 332 F.3d 1177,
5 1183 (9th Cir. 2003)(ellipsis in original; quoting Brown v. Heckler, 713
6 F.2d 441, 443 (9th Cir. 1983)); Smolen, 80 F.3d at 1273. "The ALJ's
7 duty to supplement a claimant's record is triggered by ambiguous
8 evidence, the ALJ's own finding that the record is inadequate or the
9 ALJ's reliance on an expert's conclusion that the evidence is
10 ambiguous." Webb v. Barnhart, 433 F.3d 683, 687 (9th Cir. 2005)(citing
11 Tonapetyan v. Halter, 242 F.3d at 1144, 1150 (9th Cir. 2001)).
12

13 The ALJ has a duty "'to scrupulously and conscientiously probe
14 into, inquire of, and explore for all the relevant facts'" by procuring
15 the necessary, relevant treatment records. Higbee v. Sullivan, 975 F.2d
16 558, 561 (9th Cir. 1992)(citation omitted). Further, 20 C.F.R. §
17 416.912(e)(1) provides that the Administration "will seek additional
18 evidence or clarification from your medical source when the report from
19 your medical source contains a conflict or ambiguity that must be
20 resolved, the report does not contain all of the necessary information,
21 or does not appear to be based on medically acceptable clinical and
22 laboratory diagnostic techniques." See also 20 C.F.R. § 416.917 (when
23 a claimant's medical sources provide insufficient evidence to determine
24 whether the claimant is disabled, a consultative examination may be
25 ordered); 20 C.F.R. § 416.919k (Commissioner may order the purchase of
26 "psychiatric and psychological examinations, X-rays and laboratory tests
27 (including specialized tests, such as pulmonary function studies,
28 electrocardiograms, and stress tests) from a medical source").

1 In the present case, the ALJ rejected the opinion of plaintiff's
2 treating psychologist, Dr. Klebel, in reliance on the opinion of the
3 medical expert psychologist, Dr. Kania. (A.R. 21-22.) Dr. Kania opined
4 that Dr. Klebel's opinion was "based solely upon what [plaintiff's]
5 father told the doctor and not on any independent objective findings or
6 psychological testing." (A.R. 22.)

7
8 The record contains two relatively short assessments completed by
9 Dr. Klebel: (1) a Riverside County Mental Health Plan Assessment/Care
10 Plan: Initial, signed on January 23, 2007 (the "January 2007
11 Assessment"); and (2) a Riverside Mental Health Plan Provider Referral
12 Request Form, dated April 6, 2007, on the first page, but dated January
13 23, 2007, on the third, signature page (the "April 2007 Assessment").²
14 (A.R. 235-37, 240-42, 243.)

15
16 In the January 2007 Assessment, Dr. Klebel diagnosed plaintiff with
17 disruptive disorder, not otherwise specified, ADHD combined, grand mal
18 seizures, asthma, and spiking fever difficult to contain. (A.R. 235.)
19 Dr. Klebel reported that plaintiff presented with the following problems
20 and clinical symptomatology: "aggressive, destructive, breaking all
21 toys and other things, sleepwalker and hitting brother in sleep,
22

23 ² The second and third pages of both the January 2007 Assessment and
24 the April 2007 Assessment are identical, except for a handwritten change
25 made to plaintiff's dysfunction rating on page two of the April 2007
26 Assessment, from "Moderate" to "Severe. (A.R. 236-37, 241-42.) Next to
27 the dysfunction rating box previously marked "Moderate" with a computer-
28 generated "X," Dr. Klebel handwrote and signed "Rating corrected to
Severe, 4-6-2007," in which Dr. Klebel hand-marked an "X" in the
"Severe" box. (A.R. 241.) The third page of each assessments is
identical. Given its signature date of January 23, 2007, it is likely
that this third page should have been attached only to the January 2007
Assessment. (A.R. 237, 242.)

1 [n]ightmares and violent dreams, mother was on speed during pregnancy,
2 presently father has custody, child is excited after unsupervised visit
3 with mothe[r], [h]ad a head injury in forster [sic] care from a fall."
4 (*Id.*) Dr. Klebel opined that, while plaintiff presented with a clean
5 appearance and normal affect and with speech and thought within normal
6 limits, plaintiff was "limited," "short," "agitated," and "angry."
7 (*Id.*) Dr. Klebel further opined that plaintiff requires constant
8 supervision, because he "picks up things everywhere and might be
9 endangering his safety" and because of his "[a]ggressiveness with
10 siblings." (A.R. 237.) Dr. Klebel reported that plaintiff was "in
11 treatment with neurologist in Loma Linda hospital," and at that time,
12 plaintiff's dysfunction rating was "Moderate." (A.R. 235-37.)
13

14 With respect to treatment recommendations, Dr. Klebel opined that
15 plaintiff's "destructiveness might be partially caused by his epilepsy,
16 but needs to be controlled and he needs to learn how to deal with his
17 aggrisive [sic] emotion, will take probably more than one year of
18 treatment." (A.R. 236.) Regarding the medication plaintiff was taking
19 at that time, Dr. Klebel stated that plaintiff was taking phenobarbital
20 for epilepsy and abuteral for asthma. (*Id.*) As for familial mental
21 illness, Dr. Klebel noted that plaintiff's mother is bipolar, and she
22 is, and was during her pregnancy with plaintiff, on methamphetamine, for
23 which she has not received treatment. (*Id.*)
24

25 With respect to anticipated behavioral outcome/goals, Dr. Klebel
26 listed the following goals to be completed by April 23, 2007: "[a]nger
27 management and control of agressiveness [sic], (hyperactivity possible
28 in need of control by medication), has 'non-stop' problems of aggressive

1 and destructive behavior every day - to reduce to 1-2 times per day" and
2 "[w]ill try to attempt some behavioral approach and desensitization to
3 control his aggressive and angry nightmares through talking about them
4 and playing games, reduce them from nightly and when napping, to reduce
5 1-2 times a week." (A.R. 237.) Dr. Klebel's anticipated methods for
6 achieving these goals included: "[p]lay therapy with puppets and
7 developing stories with him dealing with his problems, some cognitive
8 approach to desensitize bad memories, maybe some bad memories are
9 preverbal." (*Id.*)

10
11 In the April 2007 Assessment, Dr. Klebel again diagnosed plaintiff
12 with disruptive disorder, not otherwise specified, ADHD combined, grand
13 mal seizures, asthma, and spiking fever difficult to contain. (A.R.
14 240.) Dr. Klebel modified his dysfunction rating of plaintiff from
15 "Moderate" to "Severe" and referred plaintiff for a psychiatric
16 evaluation. (*Id.*) Dr. Klebel stated the following reasons for
17 psychiatric evaluation referral:

18
19 [Plaintiff] cannot keep attention to anything, always into
20 something, endangering himself by jumping from heights,
21 unprovoked aggressive behavior towards brothers and friends,
22 rejected from daycare for same reasons. Takes food from
23 garbage, from other in restaurants etc., Father tries to
24 control him with time out, take away toys etc. with no effect.
25 Sleepwalking, when he wakes up he is shaking for 5 minutes,
26 fidgeting all the time. Was exposed prenatally to drugs.
27 Severe behavioral problems, needs constant direct supervision.
28 This will create future problems in school and is disabling

1 his capacity to learn and mature.

2
3 (*Id.*)
4

5 After reviewing Dr. Klebel's assessments and the record as a whole,
6 it is not clear that Dr. Klebel relied entirely on plaintiff's father's
7 statements in rendering his opinion regarding plaintiff's psychological
8 and behavioral issues. While some of Dr. Klebel's statements plainly
9 must be premised upon plaintiff's father's observations (which is
10 entirely reasonable, given plaintiff's young age), it is not clear that
11 Dr. Klebel's conclusions were "based solely upon what the father told
12 the doctor and not on any independent objective findings or
13 psychological testing," as Dr. Kania opined and the ALJ concluded.
14 (A.R. 22.) A reasonable interpretation of the evidence is that Dr.
15 Klebel based his opinion, at least in part, on what he observed during
16 his sessions with plaintiff. Accordingly, the ALJ's rejection of Dr.
17 Klebel's opinion, because it was "based solely upon" plaintiff's
18 father's observations, lacks the support of substantial evidence and
19 falls short of the "specific, legitimate" standard dictated by Ninth
20 Circuit precedent.
21

22 Notwithstanding the above, plaintiff's treatment with Dr. Klebel
23 and psychological care in general appear to be limited, incomplete, and
24 inadequate to allow for proper evaluation of plaintiff's psychological
25 condition(s) and any attendant limitations.³ Specifically, plaintiff's
26

27 ³ For the minor plaintiff in this case to receive proper evaluation
28 and treatment, it is imperative that plaintiff's parents schedule and
attend appointments and follow-up appointments. This has not occurred

1 father testified at the hearing that plaintiff treated with Dr. Klebel
2 on six separate occasions, twice a month as permitted by Medicare, yet
3 the record contains only two mental health assessments by Dr. Klebel and
4 no treatment notes. (A.R. 235-37, 240-43, 410.) Further, in a
5 handwritten letter to the ALJ, dated March 24, 2007, plaintiff's father
6 stated that, according to Dr. Klebel, the January 2007 Assessment should
7 have been dated February 7, 2007, and it "was supposed to be a detailed
8 report on [plaintiff's] status instead of an assessment of what
9 [plaintiff] was diagnosed with." (A.R. 46.) However, the record does
10 not contain any assessment that bears a February 7, 2007 date, nor does
11 the record contain any "detailed report" by Dr. Klebel. In the April
12 2007 Assessment, Dr. Klebel referred plaintiff for a psychiatric
13 evaluation, yet there are no psychiatric evaluation results or treatment
14 notes in the file, and there is no evidence that plaintiff has undergone
15 a consultative psychiatric evaluation or other appropriate psychological
16 testing.

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on a regular basis thus far.

20 The record reflects several failures to follow-up with recommended
21 treatment and "no-shows" by plaintiff's mother. (A.R. 20 -- ALJ states
22 that plaintiff's doctors "suggested increasing the Phenobarbital level
23 with close follow up. [Plaintiff's] mother failed to show for any
24 follow-up visits"; 194 -- Letter dated November 14, 2004, by plaintiff's
25 treating pediatrician, Annalisa Abjelina, M.D., which states plaintiff's
26 neurologist, Debra Demos, M.D., "suggested increasing [plaintiff's] dose
27 [of phenobarbital] and close follow-up . . . but [plaintiff's mother]
28 has failed to show up to our office since August for a follow-up
examination. . . . I reported this to Child Protective Services.")
Further, despite some effort by plaintiff's father to pursue medical and
psychological care for plaintiff, the record is replete with notations
of cancelled appointments and "no-shows" by plaintiff's father as well.
(A.R. 21 -- ALJ states that, "[plaintiff's] father cancelled two
appointments and failed to show on two other occasions"; 239 -- Letter
dated February 27, 2007, by plaintiff's treating child and family
therapist, Ann Hull, M.A., which states, "Father called and cancelled
two appointments and failed to show on two other occasions").

1 Earlier treatment with child and family therapist, Ann Hull, M.A.,
2 with whom plaintiff treated on September 27 and 28, 2006, also was not
3 pursued properly. Follow-up care with Ms. Hull was not undertaken,
4 despite Ms. Hull's statement that "more time would . . . be needed to
5 determine if the symptoms [plaintiff's] father reported are observable."
6 (A.R. 239.) The record reflects that, due to the fact that plaintiff's
7 father "cancelled two appointments and failed to show on two other
8 occasions," Ms. Hull closed her file and discharged plaintiff on October
9 25, 2006. (*Id.*)

10
11 The record regarding the nature and extent of plaintiff's seizure
12 disorder also is sketchy. There is no evidence that plaintiff has
13 undergone any recent formal neurological testing to assess the nature,
14 extent, and cause(s) of his seizure disorder and the extent, if any, to
15 which he experiences side effects as a result of taking phenobarbital.
16 While medical professionals from Loma Linda University Children's
17 Hospital have opined that there may be a connection between plaintiff's
18 seizure activity and a high fever, as the diagnosis of "febrile
19 seizures" reflects,⁴ there is no evidence of formal testing to confirm
20 or rule out this theory. (A.R. 288, 298, 323, 384.) The most recent
21 brain wave test of plaintiff was performed in 2004, despite plaintiff's
22 significant seizure activity since then. (A.R. 384-86.) On November
23 15, 2004, one of plaintiff's treating physicians, Debra Demos, M.D.,
24 recommended increasing plaintiff's phenobarbital level with close
25 follow-up, but the record is devoid of any follow-up visits. (A.R. 194,
26 227.)

27
28 ⁴ According to <http://en.wikipedia.org>, a "febrile seizure" is a
convulsion triggered by a sudden rise in body temperature.

1 It is also unclear whether plaintiff's "severe" disruptive disorder
2 and ADHD are independent impairments, or whether they exist secondary to
3 plaintiff's seizure disorder and/or phenobarbital side effects. Indeed,
4 Dr. Klebel opined that plaintiff's "destructiveness **might be partially**
5 **caused** by his epilepsy," and for proper assessment, plaintiff would
6 require "probably more than one year of treatment." (A.R. 236; emphasis
7 added.)

8
9 Even the medical expert, Dr. Hubbard, testified at the hearing that
10 plaintiff's "acting out behavior" may be "just bad behavior," or "it may
11 be pathological . . . we'll see . . . investigate it." (A.R. 393.) Dr.
12 Hubbard further testified that, "we seem reasonably certain [plaintiff]
13 doesn't have a brain tumor . . . he's not doing -- a temporal lobe
14 seizure, or maybe he is. At this point, **we don't know.**" (*Id.*; emphasis
15 added.)

16
17 On remand for further development of the record, **all** treatment
18 records and reports prepared by Dr. Klebel and plaintiff's other
19 treating physicians should be obtained. Further, it appears that it may
20 be necessary to have plaintiff undergo a consultative examination by a
21 psychologist or psychiatrist and be given an appropriate work-up with
22 necessary testing and/or an appropriate neurological consultative
23 examination to assess the nature, extent, and etiology of plaintiff's
24 seizure disorder and attendant limitations.

25 ///

26 ///

27 ///

28 ///

1 II. Until The Record Has Been Developed Further, The Court Cannot
2 Assess Whether The ALJ Properly Considered The Statements Of
3 Plaintiff's Father Regarding His Observations Of Plaintiff's
4 Psychological Limitations, Seizures, And Purported Medication Side
5 Effects.

6
7 In evaluating the credibility of a claimant's assertions of
8 functional limitations, the ALJ must consider lay witnesses' reported
9 observations of the claimant. Stout, 454 F.3d at 1053. "[F]riends and
10 family members in a position to observe a claimant's symptoms and daily
11 activities are competent to testify as to [the claimant's] condition."
12 Dodrill v. Shalala, 12 F.3d 915, 918-19 (9th Cir. 1993); 20 C.F.R. §
13 416.913(d)(4) ("we may also use evidence from other sources to show the
14 severity of your impairment(s) Other sources include, but are
15 not limited to . . . spouses, parents and other care-givers, siblings,
16 other relatives, friends, neighbors, and clergy"). "If an ALJ
17 disregards the testimony of a lay witness, the ALJ must provide reasons
18 'that are germane to each witness.'" Bruce v. Astrue, 557 F.3d 1113,
19 1114 (9th Cir. 2009) (citation omitted). Further, the reasons "germane
20 to each witness" must be specific. Stout, 454 F.3d at 1054 (explaining
21 that "the ALJ, not the district court, is required to provide specific
22 reasons for rejecting lay testimony").

23
24 An ALJ may "properly discount lay testimony that conflict[s] with
25 the available medical evidence" (Vincent v. Heckler, 739 F.2d 1393, 1395
26 (9th Cir. 1984)), particularly, when, as in Vincent, "lay witnesses
27 [are] making medical *diagnoses*," because "[s]uch medical diagnoses are
28 beyond the competence of lay witnesses and therefore do not constitute

1 competent evidence." Nguyen v. Chater, 100 F.3d 1462, 1467 (9th Cir.
2 1996) (original emphasis). When, as here, however, a lay witness
3 testifies about a claimant's symptoms, such testimony is competent
4 evidence and cannot be disregarded without comment. *Id.* Under Stout,
5 454 F.3d at 1055, "where the ALJ's error lies in a failure to properly
6 discuss competent lay testimony favorable to the claimant, a reviewing
7 court cannot consider the error harmless unless it can confidently
8 conclude that no reasonable ALJ, when fully crediting the testimony,
9 could have reached a different disability determination."

10
11 Further, when an ALJ evaluates a claimant's limitations, he must
12 consider evidence regarding the side effects of medications. Social
13 Security Ruling 96-7p requires consideration of the "type, dosage,
14 effectiveness, and side effects of any medication the individual takes
15 or has taken to alleviate pain or other symptoms." See also 20 C.F.R.
16 § 416.929(c)(3)(iv). The Ninth Circuit has observed that an ALJ must
17 "consider all factors that might have a 'significant impact on an
18 individual's ability to [function].'" Erickson v. Shalala, 9 F.3d 813,
19 817 (9th Cir. 1993)(citation omitted). Such factors "may include side
20 effects of medications." *Id.* at 818.

21
22 The ALJ found that plaintiff's father's statements regarding his
23 observations of plaintiff's behavioral problems and medication side
24 effects were "not entirely credible," primarily because the treatment
25 reports did not corroborate what plaintiff's father described. (A.R.
26 20-21.) Plaintiff's father testified that plaintiff is: aggressive
27 toward his brothers; destructive with toys; has nightmares; sleepwalks;
28 usually seizes in the middle of the night; has difficulty understanding

1 and learning, because he cannot listen at least five minutes to stories
2 being read; and "hyper, aggress[ive], ang[ry], and [experiences] slurred
3 speech" as a result of taking phenobarbital to control his seizures.
4 (A.R. 78, 102, 376, 393.)

5
6 Until the record is developed further regarding plaintiff's
7 psychological condition and seizure disorder and his attendant
8 limitations, the Court cannot assess the propriety of the ALJ's
9 rejection of plaintiff's father's statements regarding his observations
10 of plaintiff. After the record has been developed further, the ALJ must
11 provide germane reasons, to the extent they exist, for rejecting the
12 statements of plaintiff's father regarding his observations of
13 plaintiff's behavioral issues, seizure activity, and medication side
14 effects.

15
16 **III. Remand Is Required.**

17
18 The decision whether to remand for further proceedings or order an
19 immediate award of benefits is within the district court's discretion.
20 Harman v. Apfel, 211 F.3d 1172, 1175-78 (9th Cir. 2000). Where no
21 useful purpose would be served by further administrative proceedings, or
22 where the record has been fully developed, it is appropriate to exercise
23 this discretion to direct an immediate award of benefits. *Id.* at 1179
24 ("the decision of whether to remand for further proceedings turns upon
25 the likely utility of such proceedings"). However, where there are
26 outstanding issues that must be resolved before a determination of
27 disability can be made, and it is not clear from the record that the ALJ
28 would be required to find the claimant disabled if all the evidence were

1 properly evaluated, remand is appropriate. *Id.*

2
3 Here, remand is the appropriate remedy to allow the ALJ the
4 opportunity to remedy the above-mentioned deficiencies and errors. See,
5 e.g., Benecke v. Barnhart, 379 F.3d 587, 593 (9th Cir. 2004)(remand for
6 further proceedings is appropriate if enhancement of the record would be
7 useful); McAllister, 888 F.2d at 603 (remand appropriate to remedy
8 defects in the record).


9
10 **CONCLUSION**

11
12 Accordingly, for the reasons stated above, IT IS ORDERED that the
13 decision of the Commissioner is REVERSED, and this case is REMANDED for
14 further proceedings consistent with this Memorandum Opinion and Order.

15
16 IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of the Court shall serve
17 copies of this Memorandum Opinion and Order and the Judgment on counsel
18 for plaintiff and for defendant.

19
20 **LET JUDGMENT BE ENTERED ACCORDINGLY.**

21
22 DATED: August 21, 2009

23 
24 _____
25 MARGARET A. NAGLE
26 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE
27
28