

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN
NORTHERN DIVISION

JULIE DOMBROWSKI,

Plaintiff,

Case No. 2:20-cv-54

v.

Hon. Maarten Vermaat
U.S. Magistrate Judge

COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY,

Defendant.

OPINION

On August 17, 2021, the Court held a hearing on Julie Dombrowski's action seeking judicial review of the final decision of the Commissioner of Social Security denying her claim for disability insurance benefits. 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). For the reasons stated on the record, the Court affirms the Commissioner's decision.

"[R]eview of the ALJ's decision is limited to whether the ALJ applied the correct legal standards and whether the findings of the ALJ are supported by substantial evidence." *Winslow v. Comm'r of Soc. Sec.*, 566 Fed. App'x 418, 420 (6th Cir. 2014) (quoting *Blakley v. Comm'r of Soc. Sec.*, 581 F.3d 399, 405 (6th Cir. 2009)); *see also* 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). Substantial evidence is defined as more than a mere scintilla of evidence but "such relevant evidence that a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion." *Jones v. Sec'y, Health & Human Servs.*, 945 F.2d 1365, 1369 (6th Cir. 1991).

Dombrowski argued that the ALJ erred in failing to give appropriate weight to the opinions of Dr. Carlson and Dr. Kroning. The ALJ applied the new regulations and articulated the persuasiveness of the prior administrative findings. 20 CFR § 404.1520c. Under the new regulations, the ALJ no longer gives specific weight to medical opinions. *Id.*

The ALJ properly determined that Dr. Carlson's medical opinion was unpersuasive and that Dr. Kroning's medical opinion was partially persuasive for the reasons explained and fully considered in the ALJ's opinion at ECF No. 9-2, PageID.81-82.

Dombrowski argued that the ALJ erred in evaluating her symptoms and failed to properly assess the effects of her pain on her ability to perform even part-time work. The ALJ properly and fully evaluated Dombrowski's statements concerning the intensity, persistence and limiting effects of her symptoms by finding that her claimed symptoms were not consistent with her impairments. *Id.*

During the hearing, the Court expressed frustration with the Commissioner's Disability Determination Explanation Form. (ECF No. 9-4, PageID.131-146.) The form contains the medical consultants' findings, but it is difficult to determine exactly which findings are attributable to a consultant. The Commissioner needs to modify this form so that reviewing Courts and ALJs can easily identify a consultant's findings and opinion. (ECF No. 9-2, PageID.81-82.)

In this case, the ALJ was left with confusing consultant opinions from Dr. Carlson and Dr. Kroning. Nevertheless, the ALJ properly evaluated the medical record and set forth substantial evidence to support the decision.

For the reasons explained on the record and in this opinion, substantial evidence supports the Commissioner's decision that Dombrowski is not disabled as defined by the Social Security Administration.

Accordingly, the decision of the Commissioner is **AFFIRMED** and Dombrowski's request for relief is **DENIED**.

Dated: August 18, 2021

/s/ Maarten Vermaat
MAARTEN VERMAAT
U. S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE