

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF UTAH,
NORTHERN DIVISION

Deborah G. v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of the Social Security
Administration

Deborah G. · No. 1:25-cv-00009 · Decided March 12, 2026

SUMMARY

The document is a magistrate judge’s Report and Recommendation in a Social Security disability benefits appeal. It recommends reversing the Commissioner’s denial of benefits and remanding because the administrative law judge failed to adequately articulate evaluation of the psychological consultative examiner’s medical opinions under the applicable regulations. The court declined to reach the claimant’s other asserted errors concerning residual functional capacity and development of the record.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Utah, Northern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Daphne A. Oberg, United States Magistrate Judge; Robert J. Shelby, District Judge
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Utah, Northern Division
DECIDED	March 12, 2026
DOCKET	1:25-cv-00009
DISPOSITION	reversed_and_remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Report and recommendation on judicial review of the Commissioner's denial of disability insurance benefits.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews whether substantial evidence supports the ALJ's factual findings and whether the ALJ applied the correct legal standards. The court may not reweigh the evidence or substitute its judgment for that of the ALJ.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Deborah G. v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of the Social Security Administration

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action

administrative law

disability definition

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security disability

administrative law

federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ adequately evaluated and articulated the persuasiveness of Dr. Colledge's psychological medical opinions under 20 C.F.R. § 404.1520c.
2. Whether the ALJ erred by failing to include limitations concerning concentrating, persisting, or maintaining pace in the RFC.
3. Whether the ALJ failed to adequately develop the administrative record by not recontacting Dr. Colledge.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ erred by failing to expressly articulate how he considered the supportability and consistency factors for Dr. Colledge's medical opinions, as required by 20 C.F.R. § 404.1520c(b)(2).
2. Reversal and remand for additional administrative proceedings are required because the ALJ's articulation error may have affected the mental RFC determination and related issues.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“But this does not make clear whether or how the ALJ evaluated the persuasiveness of Dr. Colledge’s opinions as a whole.” (Opinion analysis, p. 12)

“One might reasonably assume the ALJ considered her opinions supported and consistent, where the ALJ described some of her opinions (and other evidence) as “persuasive.”” (Opinion analysis, p. 13)

“But the ALJ did not expressly state this, and he did not articulate how he considered the supportability and consistency factors.” (Opinion analysis, p. 13)

“The problem is the ALJ himself did not draw these connections or explain how the evidence he discussed was supported or consistent.” (Opinion analysis, p. 14)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Deborah G. alleged disability based on, among other conditions, residual effects of breast-cancer treatment, cognitive complaints, diabetes, coronary artery disease, osteoarthritis, obesity, and depression. The ALJ found a moderate limitation in concentrating, persisting, or maintaining pace but assessed an RFC permitting sedentary work with the ability to understand, remember, and carry out simple and detailed instructions. A psychological consultative examiner, Dr. Tanya Colledge, reported low-average to average memory functioning and opined that Deborah G. had some impairment tolerating work stress and difficulty maintaining a consistent work schedule. The ALJ relied on portions of that opinion but did not expressly explain its supportability or consistency under the applicable regulations.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Deborah G. applied for Title II disability insurance benefits, alleging disability beginning in July 2021. After an administrative hearing, the ALJ denied benefits in March 2024, finding that she could perform past relevant work; the Appeals Council denied review, making the ALJ's decision final. The magistrate judge recommends that the district judge reverse the Commissioner's decision and remand for additional administrative proceedings because the ALJ failed to adequately explain the evaluation of a psychological consultative examiner's medical opinions.

DISPOSITION

reversed_and_remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The magistrate judge recommends that the district judge reverse the Commissioner's decision and remand for additional administrative proceedings, including reconsideration of Dr. Colledge's opinions and potentially the mental RFC, concentration-persistence-pace limitations, and need for further record development.

CASES CITED

- Lax v. Astrue, 489 F.3d 1080, 1084 (10th Cir. 2007)
- Jensen v. Barnhart, 436 F.3d 1163, 1165 (10th Cir. 2005)
- Biestek v. Berryhill, 587 U.S. 97, 102-03 (2019)
- Langley v. Barnhart, 373 F.3d 1116, 1118 (10th Cir. 2004)
- Bowen v. Yuckert, 482 U.S. 137, 140-42 (1987)
- Williams v. Bowen, 844 F.2d 748, 750-51 (10th Cir. 1988)
- Ray v. Bowen, 865 F.2d 222, 224 (10th Cir. 1989)
- Allen v. Barnhart, 357 F.3d 1140, 1142 (10th Cir. 2004)
- Zambrano v. Kijakazi, No. 1:20-1356, 2022 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 96466, at *16 (D.N.M. May 31, 2022)
- Carpenter v. Astrue, 537 F.3d 1264, 1267 (10th Cir. 2008)
- Webb v. Commissioner, 750 F. App'x 718, 720-21 (10th Cir. 2018) (unpublished)
- Endriss v. Astrue, 506 F. App'x 772, 776-77 (10th Cir. 2012) (unpublished)