

APPENDIX D-2

General Considerations for Medical Reports in a Social Security Claim

1. A background or short description of the health care providers' qualifications.
2. Length of treatment history with patient and frequency of contact.
3. A description of the diagnosis of impairment suffered by the patient.
4. A discussion of the nature of the client's condition and the medical findings that support the diagnosis.
5. A review and analysis of any test results that further confirm the diagnosis and the nature of the patient's condition.
6. An interpretation of all the findings and test results and diagnosis in terms of the functional limitations imposed by the conditions on the patient's ability to work in a substantial gainful manner. Consider the following:
 - Ability to perform work activities on a sustained regular and continuing basis.

- If appropriate, the impact of health problems on patient's ability to sit, stand, walk, lift, carry, push, pull, or other physical limitations.
 - If appropriate, limitations on the patient's ability to understand, carry out, and remember instructions, use judgment in making work-related decisions, respond appropriately to supervision, coworkers, and work situations, and deal with changes in a routine work setting.
 - If appropriate, any postural, manipulative, visual, or communicative limitations.
7. Conditions drawn by a treating health care provider with respect to a patient's limitations and work abilities will be generally disregarded unless the conclusions are explained.

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SAMPLE LETTER FROM A NEUROLOGIST

To Whom It May Concern,

Jane Smith was initially seen by me on August 25, 2003. She was initially thought to have a cervical disk problem; however, she eventually developed other symptoms suggesting a more widespread problem in the nervous system and with clinical findings, supported by an MRI scan, a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis was made. Over the last two years, she has continued to have symptoms suggesting active multiple sclerosis including difficulty walking, and sensory and visual symptoms. Associated with this is a feeling of fatigue and exacerbation of symptoms by heat. All of these create impairments, which significantly limit her physical ability to perform any substantial gainful work.

Mrs. Smith now carries a diagnosis of chronic progressive multiple sclerosis, and it is very likely that this impairment can be expected to last for a continuous period over the years.

Multiple sclerosis in itself is not expected to result in her death; however, it is a disabling disease and it is likely that there will be continued disability.

I have reviewed the Basic Work Capabilities Checklist and Activities of Daily Living questionnaires, and I agree with the outline given by Mrs. Smith.

Again, it is my best judgment that Mrs. Smith's illness of chronic progressive multiple sclerosis limits her from gainful employment at this time and certainly into the foreseeable future.

Sincerely,

[Doctor's Name]

SAMPLE LETTER FROM AN EMPLOYER

To Whom It May Concern,

During the 93–94 school year, Jane Smith became ill and was diagnosed as having multiple sclerosis. The onset of the disease was sudden and dramatic. Jane’s physical mobility decreased rapidly along with her physical stamina. It was quickly apparent that accommodations would have to be made in order to assist Jane in continuing her teaching duties.

Accommodations had to be made in three areas: Facilities, Duties, and Work Day.

Facilities:

1. Hinge adjustments were made to the doors to the staff area, office area, classrooms, and restrooms so that Jane could open them.
2. The parking lot was restriped to assist Jane in parking closer to the entryway that was closest to her classroom.
3. The room assignment configuration was adjusted to ensure that Jane’s classroom was close to an entryway. This meant that the normal grouping of grade level students could not occur.

Duties:

1. Jane was released from all staff, committee, and student supervision obligations.
2. Other staff were assigned to accompany and supervise Jane’s students during field trips.

Work Day:

1. Jane’s full-time contract was adjusted so that she could teach half-time.
2. A substitute was hired to teach the other half of her contract. Some weeks went according to schedule with Jane teaching half-days.
3. As the disease continued to be unpredictable in its manifestations, we adjusted the substitute’s role so that Jane could be released whenever she needed to be. As time progressed, Jane needed more rest; thus, the substitute was asked to be available for either half or full day work whenever needed.

If you need further information, please call at the number above.

Sincerely,

[Employer’s Name]