



Justification Letters

Justification letters should include: **Who, What, Where and How?** Remember to be patient in the funding process

A funding letter/letter of support should be in the form of a report. Useful terms:

1. “Prevention of” or “accommodation to”. For example:
 - a. Sores
 - b. Contractures
 - c. Orthopedic deformities
2. “Promote and/or support” For example:
 - a. Breathing
 - b. Swallowing
 - c. Mobility
3. Refer to the three-wheeled trike as a “three wheel therapeutic mobility device”.
4. The term to use is “adequate” not “optimal”. No product is ever “perfect”. It will not last forever because conditions of the patient and situation are constantly changing.
5. A Physician’s Note (Prescription) to endorse the report is helpful.
6. Always use “patient” not “client”. It is a medical system, and the product is being funded for medical reasons. Physicians do not have clients.
7. It is imperative to define the product as a medical necessity. It is very specialized to the individual.
8. It is also very important to point out the long-term benefits. These benefits include:
 - ◆ Bone Growth
 - ◆ Strengthening of anti-gravity muscles
 - ◆ Development of hand/eye coordination
 - ◆ Opportunity for cognitive growth
 - ◆ Respiratory activity
 - ◆ Development of Head & Trunk control
 - ◆ Social Acceptance
 - ◆ Improved Self-esteem

Here are a few examples of justification letters that successfully received funding. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to give us a call at 1-800-661-9915 for further information. Insurance Companies that we have dealt with include: Prudential, Cigna, Aultcare, Sierra (Tricare) Military Health Insurance, MPIC, IntraCare Health, Great West Life, Preferred One, Etna, Blue Cross/Shields.

Example # 1

Dear Sir,

The following letter is a request for some financial assistance to provide a therapeutic mobility device for _____.

The format of the letter document's Mr. Name of patient's medical and social history so that the reader might understand the rationale justifying the need for an appropriate therapeutic mobility device and then evaluates one such device for the patient.

BACKGROUND

Name of patient was born with left frontal lobe brain damage, which caused a mild right-sided weakness resulting in an uneven gait and difficulty tracking evenly. He became right handed.

Absences like seizures were first noted by Dr. NAME, Psychiatrist, at about age six. In teen years seizures were noticeable with head and arm movements. The severity of seizures increases to include some fall down seizures, especially noticeable during times of stress. For a six-year period 1988-1993 Name of patient was free of seizures.

Presently he has frontal lobe seizures with mild arm and leg movement while standing or sitting. Sometimes the seizures result in a fall onto his back or face.

In July 1998 following a severe seizure, he was left with left-sided weakness for a period of several months. His walking ability was severely compromised due to the left-sided weakness and balance impairment. However, with a lot of work and effort he has progressed from difficulty in sitting and standing unsupported, to fair stability in standing and walking on level surfaces and improved stability on uneven terrain. Balance ability and righting reflexes have been re-established. Name of patient has had to switch hand dominance to his right hand. For safety Name of Patient is now amendable to wearing a helmet when outside.

Although, Name of patient can now walk quite well unsupported he requires the close presence of one, and preferably two, people when walking outside because of the

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possibility of a fall down seizure. Staffs are reluctant to take Name of patient on walks because of the possibility of injury to himself and them should he have a seizure and fall.

PHYSICIAN'S REFERRAL

Recently Name of patient received a physician's referral for a therapeutic mobility device from Dr. Name of Swan River.

Such a device would serve the following purposes:

- ❑ Maintain strength in lower extremities
- ❑ Improve balance and stability
- ❑ Aid in weight control through exercise
- ❑ Improve his trunk strength
- ❑ Encourage coordination of all four extremities
- ❑ Allow outings/exercise without danger of a fall due to seizure
- ❑ May improve his vestibular sense
- ❑ May serve to help alleviate emotional stress by providing a sense of freedom and independence as he uses his renewed mobility to experience his environment in a new and engaging way.

Possible THERAPEUTIC MOBILITY DEVICE:

Researching the possibility of obtaining a therapeutic mobility device led to Freedom Concepts Inc. in Winnipeg, MB. They manufacture custom made therapeutic mobility devices, which they market throughout North America. The company manager was kind enough to send an AS 2600 Adventurer series therapeutic mobility device.

The AS 2600 Adventurer has two rear wheels spaced 34" apart for a stable base, a wide seat, high back support and two safety straps. The straps secure the rider at the waist and across the chest, ensuring the rider is kept safely in the seat. For therapeutic purposes the rider should always be accompanied by a companion who can stop the bike at any time with a brake mounted behind the seat. (The person supervising the ride should also assist Name of patient with safely mounting and dismounting the bike.) The bike is rated for a rider of approximately Name of patient's height and weight.

P.T / O.T. ASSESSMENT OF THE AS 2600 ADVENTURER

1. Design construction: Therapeutic mobility device as examined and found to have good design construction
2. Adjustments: Minor adjustments were made to adjust seat height, handlebar height, and safety straps to suit client.
3. Stability: Lateral stability of bike with patient in it was tested. A substantial push was required to lift one of the rear tires off the ground 2-3". Patient remained seated

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firmly in place while bike was tilted during testing, thanks to safety straps and lateral support from the seat back.

4. Discreet Assistance Handle: Was found to be situated to provide easy access for person supervising client and provided enough braking power to stop patient when necessary.
5. Pedaling: Patient had difficulty getting started on small inclines with the trike, but once underway he managed quite well.
6. Footstraps: Patient had some difficulty getting his feet into the footstraps on the bike and required assistance for it.
7. Brakes: Patient had good control of the brakes
8. Steering: Patient kept the trike on course reasonably well.) If the patient is negotiating sidewalks it is strongly recommended that the person accompanying him be in control of the assistance handle at all times so that the trike can be stopped if he should approach the edge of the curb.)
9. Attention: Patient was quite engaged by operation of the “mobility device” and cycling provided a good means of attuning him to his surroundings. (ie. Cueing patient to look left, right, and is aware of any obstacles in his path.)

PT / OT RECCOMENDATIONS

1. Safe operation of the therapeutic mobility device (AS 2600 Adventurer) is possible for Name of Patient if he is always accompanied by a supervising adult trained in helping him mount/dismount the mobility device, and in using the assistance handle to stop the device when necessary.
2. Precautions: A) Avoid busy streets. B) The supervising adult should always keep one hand on the assistance handle to stop the device if necessary. C) Maintain a slow speed. D) Always use safety straps.
3. Obtain larger foot-pedals and foot straps/toe clips for the device.
4. Put a larger sprocket on the rear axle to make pedaling easier.
5. Use the device regularly so that the patient can maintain a high level of fitness.

Note: Manufacturer indicated he would implement the above changes (#3&4) to the therapeutic mobility device at no additional cost.

CLOSING

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Thank you for your consideration of Mr. Name of patient for financial assistance in the purchase of a therapeutic mobility device. Should you have any questions regarding this matter please contact Name of therapist & Name of therapist at phone number.

Example # 2

RE: FREEDOM CONCEPTS 3-WHEEL MOBILITY AID

This letter is being written on behalf of Patients name. Patients name is a _ year old boy with the diagnosis of spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy. Patients name is able to sit independently when places on a bench or in a chair. He is on a standing program and performs exercise ambulation in therapy. Due to the limited amount of lower extremity activity, Patients name's legs are very weak. His right side is stronger than his left side and his right arm is his most functional extremity. It is felt he would benefit from the Freedom Concepts 3-wheel Mobility Aid to increase his upper and lower extremity activity and thereby his strength.

The Freedom Concept 3-Wheel Mobility Aid is extremely versatile making assisted and self propulsion successful. This mobility aid comes with the option of different handlebars and multi-adjustable steering. Each chosen handlebar is individually adjustable in height, depth, width and rotation allowing unilateral set-up when indicated due to physical limitations. This adjustment is important because it will enhance trunk stability and upright midline positioning combined with a shoulder girdle resting place. The steering can be placed into either a non-steering or self-steering position. This would help Patients name learn to steer with the assistance of the caregiver rear steering component in preparation for independence.

The rear steering component is an accessory, which no other mobility aid provides. The user is able to steer but an attendant is able to assist without interference. The self-centering spring attached between the frame and steering column will assist to pull the handlebar into a midline position when in a self steering set-up. This will benefit Patients name as he tends to use his right arm more than his left and the mobility aid will give him the opportunity to use both upper extremities.

The adjustable seat combined with a contoured back comes in two sizes. It is height adjustable and comes with a flexible shoulder harness and hip belt.

A unique bottom bracket attached to the frame assists in placing the direct drive pedals with its low gear ratio in proper alignment to an individual's hip and heel. It is a biomechanical advantage to have this alignment. By positioning the hip, heel and footplate into a vertical plane, an individual is able to maximize the muscle strength necessary to successfully activate this mobility aid. Since Patients name wears AFO's, footplates with ankle huggies and toe straps are necessary. Without this accessory, he would not be able to keep his foot on the pedal because of the fixed position of the ankle.

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Given the optional alignment provided by the Freedom Concepts 3-Wheel Mobility Aid, Patients name's lower extremities can provide the steady reciprocal movement to propel the device. As previously stated, there is a biomechanical advantages for energy efficient movement, and there is also physiological advantages. Some physiological advantages may include, but not be exclusive to, cardio respiratory, increased circulation, and increased bowel motility. In addition, the use of his upper extremities could benefit his eye and hand coordination skills.

In my professional opinion, Patients name will benefit from the Freedom Concept 3-Wheel Mobility Aid. It will provide a biomechanical advantageous positioning device for potentially independent mobility. Since he is usually transported in a stroller or wheelchair, it will give him an opportunity to exercise for aforementioned physiological benefits in a park as well as playground situations to be amongst his peers.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Physical Therapist

Excellent suggestions from one of our many physical therapists:

“Making Mobility a Reality.” How unfortunate that health insurance will often refuse to pay for meaningful therapy. Call a cycle a “mobility aid.” Many times I have seen the Freedom Concept cycles (eg. mobility aid) provide the ONLY means by which a patient is able to move about safely and effectively using his or her own muscle power. In other words, using this mobility aid may be the only way certain individuals can perform meaningful experience. As a device which provides this opportunity, it becomes a primary condition for the achievement of anticipated goals and expected outcomes which otherwise may not even be approached. Examples of these are standard goals, recommended by the APTA Guide to Physical Therapy Practice, are listed below.

Short-term:

- Aerobic capacity is increased.
- Endurance is increased.
- Energy expenditure per unit of work is decreased.
- Lower extremity joint integrity & mobility improve.
- Motor control is improved.
- Motor learning is enhanced.
- Sensory awareness increases.
- Muscle performance (strength, power, endurance) is increased.
- Postural control improves.
- Quality & quantity of movement across body segments is improved.

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- Range of motion increases.
- Relaxation increases.
- Ventilation and respiration are improved.

Long-term:

- Ability to perform physical actions associated with typical leisure activity is established.
- Mobility in the community improves.
- Ability to assume a social role in the family and community is improved through participation in leisure activities.
- Fitness is improved.
- Health status is improved.
- Physical capacity is increased.
- Physical function is improved.
- Sense of well-being is improved.
- Utilization of physical therapy services is optimized.
- Cost of health care services is decreased.
- Intensity of health care decreases.
- Long-term health benefits of a regular exercise program decrease future health risks.

The Bottom Line:

Freedom Concepts mobility aid can provide a means of a safe, meaningful physical activity for patients who are otherwise wheel chair bound, or who have ataxia or fluctuating muscle tone which renders ambulation to convince third party payers that the mobility device may be the best way to accomplish physical therapy goals, bridging the gap between exercise in the clinic and moving out into the community.

Key Words:

Mobility aid, Safety, Health care cost reduction, Long-term health benefits, Functional goals & measurements.

Suggestion:

Therapists are reminded to be persistent when advocating for equipment, and to consider the usefulness of patient videotapes.