

Sample Letter of Medical Necessity for the Natural-Fit Handrim

Date _____

To the Medical Insurance Company of _____

RE: SS# 999 99 9999

We had the pleasure of seeing _____ for a wheeled mobility and seating evaluation. He / she is a _____ year old male/female with _____. These conditions result in him being dependent on the use of a manual wheelchair for all mobility needs both in the home and community. For the past _____ months, he has been experiencing chronic pain and fatigue in his _____ (wrists, shoulders, and/or hands).

To address this condition, I recommend the Natural-Fit™ Handrim, an ergonomic wheelchair handrim assembly. By allowing for more efficient propulsion, the Natural-Fit will enable my client to remain in a manual wheelchair (avoiding the costs of a power wheelchair) and will improve his quality of life through reduced pain and fatigue. Without this device, _____ will not have a safe and efficient handrim for mobility or function either within his home or in the community. He will remain with chronic pain and fatigue in his _____ (wrists, shoulders, and/or hands) and will be at greater risk for injury in the upper extremities as a result of repetitive stress of daily wheelchair propulsion.

His current manual wheelchair with standard wheelchair handrims is no longer appropriate in meeting his needs due to the poor grip provided by the standard handrim. Because a standard handrim is a small diameter round tube, it does not provide an ergonomic grip for his hand for propulsion, there is no place to rest his thumb, and there is a gap between the rim and the wheel in which his fingers get caught. To compensate for the poor fit, he either grabs the wheel tire along with the handrim to propel his wheelchair, or he repetitively grips the handrim with his finger flexors to propel his wheelchair. Over time, excessive activation of the finger flexors will bring about continued fatigue and pain and may result in carpal tunnel syndrome, a debilitating injury that often requires surgery and/or transition to a power wheelchair. A tight grip on the handrim also causes excessive force to be exerted by the elbow and shoulder, which ultimately can lead to pathology at those joints as well.

We have determined that an ergonomic wheelchair handrim is the most reasonable and cost-effective alternative in meeting his needs, reducing his chronic pain and fatigue, improving his quality of life, and allowing him to remain in a manual wheelchair instead of having to buy a power wheelchair. In contrast to standard handrims, the Natural-Fit is a two-piece assembly that provides five features: 1) An ergonomic design to fit the hand that provides a superior grip, 2) An oval component of the assembly that provides an expanded, smooth surface for braking, 3) A contoured component of the assembly for the thumb with friction coating that provides a separate surface for propulsion, 4) A sealed gap between the rim and the wheel that enhances safety by preventing fingers from getting caught, and 5) An enlarged surface area that eliminates the need to push on the wheelchair tires. These features will increase propulsion efficiency (e.g., reduced activation of the finger flexors, reduced stress on the shoulder), improve control when braking, and enhance safety.

Research evidence supports the benefits of the Natural-Fit Handrim. One study funded by the National Institutes of Health (Grant #R43 HD39962-01) documents the improved propulsion efficiency afforded by the Natural-Fit. Another study documents that use of the Natural-Fit reduces self-reported pain and fatigue among wheelchair users. In this study (n=46), when users of the Natural-Fit (average use time was 25 weeks) were asked to compare propelling with the Natural-Fit to propelling with their prior handrims, 85% reported less fatigue, 80% reported less pain in their wrists, 65% reported less pain in their shoulders, and 93% said the Natural-Fit was better than a standard rim. For research references that form the basis for the information provided in this letter, you may visit www.3rivers.com/nfhresearchreferences.php.

Please refer to the attached report of _____'s visit to our clinic for details as needed. Also attached is a prescription and a copy of a price quote for the Natural-Fit Handrim.

Please give careful consideration in reviewing these recommendations and do not hesitate to contact us should you need clarification of his needs or have any further questions.

Sincerely,