



To: Friends, Family & Associates

Re: Information for Use In _____'s Disability Claim
(claimant's name)

I am asking you to provide your observations regarding the claimant's restrictions and limitations to help Social Security Administration better understand the challenges they face. This letter may help answer questions you may have about how to best provide this information.

Where should I send the form once completed?

Mail to:

Mary Kay Hansen Law Firm
1101 Cornhusker Hwy., Suite 201
Lincoln, NE 68521

Email to:

records@mkhansenlaw.com

Fax to:

402-477-0231

Are there any general guidelines?

- Tell the truth and use your own words.
- Do not exaggerate, but do not minimize their difficulties.
- Write from personal knowledge - your own observations, not what someone else has told you. If you cannot answer a question, simply write: I do not know, not applicable, or other reason for not answering.
- Provide relevant details and examples, but try to be concise.
- Be an "honest pessimist." We need focus on limitations and restrictions rather than abilities.

Is there anything that I should not say?

As long as you tell the truth, write from personal knowledge and focus on limitations and challenges, there is nothing you should not say. But here are a few tips:

- Unless you have a medical background or have some other reason to know about their medical conditions, do not write about medical issues. Leave that for the treatment providers.
- Do not focus on the time when someone was hospitalized. People often think it is helpful to describe how bad things were when someone was hospitalized. But we have hospital records for that; and everyone would agree that a patient cannot

work while hospitalized. Instead, we need your help describing his/her life during more ordinary times.

- Do not try to play on the sympathy of the judge. The judge will find him/her disabled or not disabled based on their inability to work, not because he/she is a nice person or needs money, etc.
- Do not write about his/her inability *to get* a job. The Social Security Act says that the only thing that matters is her/her ability *to do* a job.
- Do not compare him/her to others who seem less disabled but get disability benefits. Such comparisons do not help and may even give the wrong impression.
- Do not draw conclusions about his/her ability to work. We will let the judge draw his or her own conclusions based on the facts and descriptions you provide.
- Do not argue the case. Leave that to Mary Kay.

Thank you very much for taking the time to assist the claimant with his/her Social Security disability case. Your comments will provide a unique opportunity for the judge to understand the real-world ramifications of his/her condition. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards,

Tawny Anderson
Legal Assistant
tawny@mkhansenlaw.com

Re: Observations for use in _____'s disability claim
(claimant's name)

Explain your relationship with him/her. How long you have known him/her. How often you get to see one another?:

Explain how he/she has changed since becoming disabled. Describe his/her life both before and after the disability began:

Have you observed he/she having difficulty performing certain activities? Tell about these:

Have you observed him/her having difficulties performing daily activities?:

Have you observed instances where even the most modest activities have necessitated a lengthy recuperation?:

Have you observed him/her being unable to participate in scheduled activities because of his/her impairment? Describe missed family dinners, weddings, reunions, family occasions or other schedule activities:

If he/she has a physical disability, describe difficulties you have observed with sitting, standing, walking, lifting, bending, etc.:

If he/she has mental limitations, describe difficulties understanding, remembering and carrying out instructions, and in responding appropriately to supervisors, co-workers or work pressures, etc. It helps to include specific examples that you have noticed:

Write about things you help him/her with, or you know he/she needs help with:

Have you observed him/her in pain? You may have noticed difficulty concentrating, inability to pay attention to simple things, forgetfulness, a quick temper, avoiding other people, crying spells, or poor stress tolerance? Please describe these occurrences:

Does he/she have good days and bad days? Describe what he/she does on a good day and on a bad day. Estimate how many times per month he/she has a bad day:

Sometimes a person's disability is what we call "episodic." That is, between episodes they are fairly normal; but the episodes are frequent enough that they would never be able to hold a job. If this is a problem for him/her, describe in detail an episode that you have observed and, if you know, estimate how often such episodes occur:
