**Parent Letter**

Appeal: patient name

Request ID: Patient ID

Insurance name, address, etc. RE: Appeal

Patient Name: patient name

Member ID: patient insurance ID Grp #: patient group ID

Request ID: from original letter of request Date

Dear Appeal Coordinator:

My name is and am the mother of . is a very bright honor roll student at School in I am (brief description of parent(s).

I am writing to you to thank you for the approval of the basic components for my son's first power chair, but in appeal of the decision to deny the following items on my son's wheelchair based on the lack of medical necessity:

(list of components requested and denied)

* Chassis with reflectors
* Left and right arm rest pouches
* Stander accessory (stand and drive package and accessories)
* Power elevation
* Transfer handles
* Push handles
* Medical bag hooks
* Attendant controller
* Controller Harness

(include a bit about your son, where you live, his lifestyle, etc.) I will look at each item individually, but let me begin with information about our community and my son. We live in a very rural, small community where walking in the community is the norm, especially for students from the combined middle/high school. My son is very social, very intelligent and very willing and able to live as independently as his muscles will allow. He has numerous friends and often will "walk" home from school (currently in a mobility scooter) as we only live a few blocks from the school. My son has an approved service dog that attends school with him daily. This 'walking' home, allows for needed social interaction with friends as well as healthy sunshine for my son and exercise for his dog.

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Discuss the need for each of the denied components – what they are, why they are needed, etc. Examples follow:

I tell you all of this as to help you understand the need for the reflectors. As a society, we encourage able bodied people who can walk or run to have reflective clothing or devices on for safety and I believe there is no difference in those who use their wheels as their legs if they are to be in the community, or

even in a school parking lot going in and out of your vehicle. It is a safety feature that should be standard on all mobility devices.

Given that my son is not able to get out of his chair to access small items he may need for school, the arm rest pouches are necessary. He will use these to carry pencils, calculators and even needed treats for his service animal. Without these, he must consistently forfeit the limited independence that he does have by having to ask others to gather these items for him. The entire purpose of the power chair is to allow him to be as independent as possible as his disorder progresses. Not having access to items at school or home, while he still has use of his upper extremities, in part defeats this purpose.

The stander. I can't stress enough the medical necessity of this feature. In Duchenne, the patient, will lose the ability to move and to stretch out any part of his/her body on his own. This causes ligaments to shorten and contractures in the joints that are not only painful, but can cause deformation of the body that will ultimately result in life threatening surgeries and more cost to the insurance company. We also know that standing helps with bone strength and straightening of the spine for preventing scoliosis. Any of these conditions are dangerous and more costly for insurance in the long run than providing a stander on the wheelchair.

I have heard the argument that a stand-alone piece of equipment, a stationary stander, will provide the same medical benefit as one that comes as a part of the wheelchair. This may be, however, I am a single mom who is already having trouble assisting with transferring my son from one place to the other. I have no help at home and having to transfer him from his chair into a stander, get him standing and situated, hold him in place while also attaching the needed pieces for him to be able to stand independently and safely will be nearly impossible.

In addition to the above, I need to ask the question of you how you would feel knowing that there is technology that will allow you to stand up with your peers, walk with them, and look them eye to eye, allow you to raid the refrigerator, or get a cup out of a kitchen cabinet? All of the above apply to \_\_\_, but specifically he would like to stand to use the restroom or even stand to brush his teeth, he would like to stand and cheer for his favorite football team and most importantly he would like to stand

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so that he looks as much like the other students he interacts with as he can. Additionally, as he enters high school, the reality is he would like to STAND and WALK across his graduation stage in 4 short years. The stander is as essential to his future medical condition in preventing contractures and helping prevent scoliosis as it is to his quality of life. It is also essential from a caregiver's standpoint in keeping him as healthy as possible for as long as possible.

As stated, \_\_\_\_ is in a Middle/High School combined school. Next year, he will technically be in high school, 9th grade. At the high school level, he will be in upper level science classes (most likely advanced placement classes) with the high lab tables. He will need the elevator in order to be able to access the table top in the classroom. We also have a 'bar height' kitchen table that we eat at in our home. Seph needs the elevator to access his food. In addition to the above mentioned reasons, the elevator also significantly aids in transferring \_\_\_\_\_ from the chair to his bed, to another chair (should he choose to sit in the den in something other than the wheelchair). The assistance in transferring goes back to the caregiver being a single mom and not being able to lift and move an immobile and growing body. The

elevator will help in preventing future back problems for me that ultimately would be paid for by this same insurance. The elevator also helps lessons the risk of dropping him during transfer, which can not only be catastrophic, but deadly for young men with Duchenne.

While we are talking about safety in transferring, it should be noted that the transfer handles that can be used for assistance in transferring are critical. Again, as a single mom, while \_\_\_\_ is able to assist in his transferring by grabbing onto these handles, he should be allowed too. His ability to help himself is should be fostered, not to mention the ultimate affect that not having the handles would have on my back and body.

I would like to thank you for approving the tilt feature on the wheelchair. That is critical to allow for change in pressure points on his body and comfort throughout the day. However, you denied the Controller harness which is the wiring to make the tilt feature work. I am asking for this to be approved as I don't understand the ability to recline without the mechanics to make it work.

It is my understanding that it is common occurrence that electric wheelchairs breakdown, regardless of the care given to them. While I agree that push handles don't seem on the surface as medically necessary, I would think the ability to move the chair from one place to the other with push handles is needed for the safety and wellbeing of the patient. It is not safe nor recommended to move the patient from the chair especially by those untrained in his movement (such as with teachers

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at his school), but would be ok for them or me to be able to push the chair out to our

handicapped accessible van so that I can access repair. I do not understand the

denial of this feature at all.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a 15 y/o young man with declining muscle strength. This affects his hand control and reaction times. While he is capable to control the wheelchair himself safely most of the time, he is 1) a teenage boy and 2) declining in strength. Should he lose control of the chair, the attendant controller would allow me to gain control. Also if the chair needs to go into the shop for repair, the attendant controller allows for someone to 'drive' the chair without actually sitting in it and possibly damaging the customized parts of the chair. I do believe this is an important component of the entire chair feature that allows for safety.

Summary

I would ask that you reconsider your initial decision to deny all the parts of the wheelchair denied initially, for all of the reasons stated above, but mainly because this is a young man that desperately wants to be like his peers and to remain as healthy and independent as he can for as long as he can. The

ravages on his body due to Duchenne MD are horrific enough that to be confined to a wheelchair that does not help him socially, emotionally and physically adds to the burden and overall emotional and physical wellbeing of my son.

I ask that if you need further information and/or medical records, you speak with (name of your PT or PM&R MD) , at (institution) at (Phone number). I thank you for your consideration and anxiously await your decision.

Sincerely,

(Parent signature)