

May 15, 2002

Ms Maria Testcase
1234 Main Street
San Diego, CA 92126

Dear Ms Testcase, # 01230123

On May 8, 2002 you completed a medical evaluation at the California Institutes of Preventive Medicine offices in San Diego with my assistant, Michael Hughes, PA. I have reviewed your records and would like you to know the diagnoses he established as a result of this evaluation. I shall also provide you additional information about some of them. This will give you a chance to see the way a doctor looks at the state of your health. Hopefully, the information in this letter will help you have a better understanding of the state of your health, perhaps some understanding of how it got that way, and enable you to know how to improve it should you so choose. This information is in your medical record here where it is held confidentially for comparison when you return in future years. Because you now have this medical information, you are the decision maker as to whether you share it with other physicians of your choice. Keep this letter for possible future need.

Diagnoses:

Obesity
Diabetes mellitus
Hypercholesterolemia
Hypertension, treated

Secondary Diagnoses:

Stasis Dermatitis
Chronic low back pain

Being overweight has sometimes been called "the basic defect" because it underlies so many other health problems: high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, gallstones, diabetes, and heart disease itself. Only a small minority of people can lose useful amounts of weight on their own; therefore, California Institutes of Preventive Medicine offers a choice of weight management programs. To help you better understand this approach, we gave you while here a videotape containing the comments of a number of patients who have successfully lost weight in these Programs. For further information about participating, call 619-123-4567.

Diabetes mellitus causes premature aging of blood vessels. As a result, most diabetics live shortened lives because of the blood vessel complications of their diabetes: heart attack, stroke, and circulatory problems affecting other organs like the kidneys and eyes. While it is important to control blood sugar levels in diabetes, this does not remove the risk and complications of *being* diabetic. Thus, diabetes is a far more serious condition than most people understand it to be.

Most people assume that diabetics do not produce enough insulin. This is certainly true for those few who became diabetic in childhood. But, what is surprising is that people who become diabetic as adults actually have *more* insulin than normal circulating in their bodies. However, that insulin is largely inactivated by fat in their diet and in their body. This is actually good news because it means that major reductions in fat intake can often reverse diabetes. For instance, in our Weight Program we followed 320 overweight diabetics, many on insulin or oral anti-diabetic medication, and found that 74% of them were off all medication and no longer diabetic at the end of the Weight Program. In addition, high fiber diets have been shown to reduce a person's tendency towards diabetes. Although all this is easy to talk about, it is difficult to accomplish on one's own so you should call us at the above number to learn what sort of help is available. The bottom line is that being diabetic is dangerous, but major changes in eating habits provide an option for a significant number of people to cease being diabetic.

We found that your cholesterol level is elevated (hyperlipidemia). This is known to be a risk factor leading to heart disease. Another risk factor underlying heart disease is being overweight. We have found that anyone who is even a little overweight is likely to be eating a diet that is needlessly high in fat. By reducing the amount of fat you eat, you are likely to reduce both your cholesterol levels and your weight. The good news is that one action has two desirable effects.

High blood pressure, hypertension, is potentially a serious problem because it can cause damage silently when it is not controlled. The medication you are taking is working satisfactorily, so be sure to continue taking it. You might wish to measure your own blood pressure at home to confirm this in the future. Automatic blood pressure cuffs are now quite reliable and easily affordable; we sell them at our cost at California Institutes of Preventive Medicine, along with a videotape about how to measure your blood pressure at home.

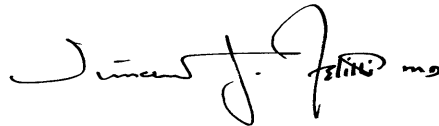
Chronic low back pain is one of the more frustrating problems we see in medicine, both in terms of precise diagnosis and in terms of treatment. From the standpoint of diagnosis, chronic low back pain is what we have left after disk disease, arthritis, osteoporosis, and other recognizable problems are excluded. Most physicians feel it is the result of weak back muscles being strained, plus prolonged contraction of those same back muscles as a result of nervous stress. Treatment consists of back strengthening exercises, carried out at a time you are not having much pain. A fine book discussing all aspects of this has been written by Dr. John Sarno and published by Time Warner Books in 1991 under the title, "Healing Back Pain." Any bookstore should be able to get you a copy if it is not already in stock.

I hope this information is useful to you. A lot of other things were done of course, but they were normal and discussed with you at the time of your visit. A letter of summary like this enables you to understand your health and understand what you can do to protect and improve it. I would be grateful to hear whether you consider it helpful. Please drop me a line at the letterhead address, even anonymously if you wish, and let me know how you feel about receiving this letter, or the evaluation itself. And if anything important was not addressed or was not adequately explained, let me know so we can get that straightened out. One way in which this letter can help is to take it with you when you

see a doctor who is not familiar with you; that way rapid understanding of your overall medical status can take place.

Lastly, I would like to make some general observations: If you will keep yourself slender, not smoke, drink alcohol only in small amounts, walk regularly, and wear seat belts, then you are likely to do more for yourself than can all of medical science. Modern medicine, after all, is designed largely to deal with the complications caused by *not* following this advice. Should you wish to do anything further, it would be to take daily one capsule of multivitamins with minerals. At your age, and given your situation, it would make sense to come back for re-evaluation in one year. The problem now is not so much what is going on as what you are going to do about what is going on. You have my best wishes for success in that regard. We can help, but the first step is yours.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vincent J. Felitti MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the letters "Vincent J." written in a larger, more prominent style than "Felitti MD".

Vincent J. Felitti, MD