

Rifton Pacer Gait Trainers

A Sample Letter of Medical Necessity: Homecare Setting for Adults

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PO Box 260, Rifton NY, 12471 • www.rifton.com • sales@rifton.com • **800.571.8198** • fax: 800.865.4674

Rifton Pacer Gait Trainer

Components of a letter of Medical Necessity

Describe who you are, what you want, and beneficiary's name:

As Jane Doe's therapist, I am requesting funding authorization for a Rifton Pacer gait trainer. This durable medical equipment device was trialed with the patient in her home on _____. Present with me during the trial and providing input were: Jane Doe, XX her husband (primary caregiver), and XX, a certified Assistive Technology Professional with Home Medical Solutions, Inc.

Establish your credentials, and relationship to beneficiary:

I am a physical therapist in private practice serving patients in both home-care and long term care settings. I am a board certified neurological specialist with the APTA with additional experience in geriatrics. I am certified with the ASPHP as a certified safe patient handling professional (CSPHP.) I have been Jane's home-care physical therapist for the past eight months.

Explain the beneficiary's condition, including diagnosis, or nature of injury:

Jane is a 58-year-old client who has a diagnosis of [acquired neuromotor disability.] Since onset, she has used a manual wheelchair and is capable of ambulating short distances in the home with a standard walker and the moderate assistance of her husband who is also her primary caregiver. Because of issues with constipation Jane is currently on a bowel/bladder management program.

Describe beneficiary's current functional level noting their limitations without the requested equipment:

Secondary to her diagnosis, Jane presents with lower extremity muscular weakness, impaired motor control and poor balance. This restricts her endurance and puts her at a high risk for falls.

At present she requires minimal assistance to transfer from supine to sitting at the edge of her bed and then maintains this position with close supervision/contact guard for up to five minutes. For her stand and pivot transfers from bed to wheelchair and from wheelchair to commode or shower chair she requires moderate assistance and support. And she uses a standard walker with moderate assistance from a caregiver for all standing and ambulation tasks. Because of her balance and endurance issues her ambulation is limited to short distances.

As a result, Jane spends about 15 hours a day in her wheelchair and is progressively losing what little functional abilities remain. Prolonged sitting also puts her at an increased risk for pressure ulcers, contractures, and osteoporosis. Although she can bear approximately 50% of her own weight, she has no support or means to improve her weight-bearing, ambulation and transition skills. Without the appropriate support and equipment, Jane will regress, becoming more dependent for all transfers and functional mobility. As she is already at risk for increased obesity, the prospect of inactivity and subsequent physical dependency is of significant concern. Transfers will become more demanding for her husband, and eventually, if he becomes unable to provide appropriate care in the home, it will be costly to place Jane in a facility to receive the care she needs.

State the type of equipment and accessories being requested:

I am requesting a Rifton Pacer gait trainer for Jane with a dynamic upper frame, a standard base, a multi-position saddle, arm platforms, and odometer. The Pacer can assist even the most significantly involved individual in



achieving a supported upright position while allowing for lower extremity movement that is comfortable, safe and therapeutic.

Describe why the device is medically necessary:

Because of Jane's diagnoses, she is dependent on her husband for any active mobility. The Pacer is medically necessary for Jane because it will give her the much needed support in active mobility during activities of daily living, plus providing opportunities to participate in the transfers and to practice standing and gait. These are important functional skills for Jane to work on to maintain and potentially improve so that her husband can continue to provide Jane's care in their home.

- 1. Supported standing.** The Pacer will support Jane in standing to maintain her joint, muscle, bone and skin health. Relief of pressure on skin surfaces with this change in position will decrease the risk of skin breakdown from prolonged sitting. Being upright at intervals throughout the day will provide the opportunity for gravity-assisted stretching, self-initiated joint ROM and stimulating bone mineral density to help counter the process of osteoporosis. The upright position also improves respiration, digestion, circulation, and bowel/bladder function. Using the Pacer for standing in addition to gait training will eliminate the need to obtain a separate additional adaptive product for supported standing (at a cost of approximately \$3,000 - \$6,000).
- 2. Transfers.** The supported sit-to-stand function of the Pacer in combination with the multi-positioning saddle makes it possible for Jane's husband to easily and safely assist Jane from her wheelchair into a standing position. Jane will be able to participate in these transfers as well, taking weight through her lower extremities to tolerance.
- 3. Gait training.** Ambulation has numerous essential health benefits:
 - Bone is deposited and formed in response to stress on the bone tissue according to Wolf's law. Ambulation distributes Jane's body weight more evenly onto each leg during the single leg stance segment of the gait cycle. This will have a positive impact on bone mineral density, since Jane is at risk for increased osteoporosis with lack of physical activity.
 - Increased opportunity and practice of transitioning from sitting to standing and walking will strengthen her muscles and maintain her range of motion.
 - The opportunity to ambulate provides Jane with physical exercise that will have positive circulatory and respiratory benefits. Ambulation results in a rhythmic contraction and relaxation of lower extremity muscles that improve circulation and venous return. Circulation is also critical for integumentary health, reducing Jane's risk for developing pressure sores.
 - Repetitive step-taking, such as with the person's body weight supported, has been shown to improve ambulatory function of persons with neurological injury. Jane is highly motivated to practice walking on a regular basis to improve her lower extremity strength and step taking ability. One of the purposes of State Medicaid programs is to help a client attain the capability of independence (42 U.S.C. § 1396). The Pacer fits within Jane's individual needs, including independence, capacity for ambulation, and health. The denial of medically necessary DME that permits the individual to be independently mobile, and decrease dependence on others to function, would be promoting a situation of increasing helplessness.

During the trial with the Pacer today, Jane was able to take numerous steps forward with supervision, and the level of safety was such that both Jane and her husband would be confident that she could perform this activity independently. There was no risk of falls while Jane was supported in the device. Her physician and the members of the assessment team agree that Jane has the potential to improve her motor functions with appropriate durable medical equipment, making the Pacer a medical necessity.

With this device Jane's overall health and functional mobility will be maintained and improved, minimizing or avoiding further medical intervention and/or expensive surgeries to resolve secondary complications.



Show how the requested equipment will result in an increase of function and other physical benefits:

With a trial of gait training equipment options, Jane has shown the capability to take steps with the support of the dynamic upper frame and the multi-position saddle. Alternative static frame support, and alternative weight-bearing and pelvic positioning options were shown to be inadequate in providing Jane with the support she needed to both stabilize and allow movement of her pelvic girdle and trunk to successfully achieve step-taking.

The dynamic upper frame allows for optional vertical up and down movement to provide dynamic weight-bearing, enabling Jane to move his center of gravity vertically as in typical biomechanics of gait. This vertical assist facilitates the stance limb to move more easily into the toe-off phase of gait, while the opposite limb can swing forward more freely. Additionally, the dynamic upper frame allows for optional side-to-side movement to facilitate weight-shifting as in natural gait patterns. This is medically necessary as it will substantially improve success with step-taking.

The multi-position saddle can be adjusted in height, depth and angle, for customized pelvic positioning. This saddle provides full pelvic and weight-bearing support to the user with the option of progressively reducing the supports as the user improves postural control when working towards independent gait. In addition, the multi-position saddle is designed so that it can be used to aid transfer from sitting to standing. This makes transfers easier for the caregiver and gait training opportunities more likely to happen.

In her wheelchair, Jane depends on the arm rests to help stabilize her trunk and head and keep her body in alignment. She will therefore require the arm platforms on the Pacer for the same reason during gait practice. The arm platforms will also help control the positioning of her body within the Pacer allowing her to fully concentrate on controlling and maneuvering the device while participating in her mobility tasks.

Jane will benefit from the unique casters available on the standard base which are designed to allow for easier steering and control of the device during ambulation: the swivel lock guides movement keeping the Pacer in a straight line course, avoiding collisions with the walls of the hall or with other pedestrians. Adjustable resistance slows movement when necessary such as when going down a ramp. And the forward-only lock prevents inadvertent backwards movement, which is also needed to ease ambulation and control of the device when going up a ramp, for example.

Since Jane is receiving services under her health insurance, she needs a reliable measurement for her health care providers to document that progress is being achieved. The odometer on the Pacer can be quickly re-set to show how much distance Jane is able to ambulate in a gait training session. This will give her health care providers a concrete way to show progress in her interventions for improved step-taking and walking endurance.

Itemization of the Pacer Gait Trainer:

Item	Description of Medical Necessity
<p>Dynamic upper frame</p> 	<p>Allows for optional vertical up/down movement to provide dynamic weight-bearing; allows for optional side-to-side movement to provide dynamic weight-shift. Enabling dynamic movement of the frame creates a floating movement of the entire upper frame and prompt system, substantially improving success with step-taking by allowing more natural patterning in gait. Height adjustable.</p>
<p>Standard upper frame</p> 	<p>A static upper frame to which the prompt accessories attach, required as a basic component of the item. Height adjustable.</p>
<p>Standard base</p> 	<p>The basic base frame with four 5.5" casters with features that include swivel-lock, forward-only lock, drag, and brake options. These features serve as gait training settings that substantially improve gait control for the more involved client.</p>
<p>Utility base</p> 	<p>A base frame with 8" front casters and 11.5" rear wheels, designed to accommodate surfaces such as grass, gravel, or wood chips, enabling increased participation in home, school, and community environments.</p>
<p>Treadmill/stability base</p> 	<p>A base frame for treadmill and overland use; utilizing the Pacer over the treadmill provides opportunity for increased intensity gait training and step taking practice in an indoor environment.</p>
<p>Arm prompts</p> 	<p>Allow for shoulder/arm positioning to assist weight-bearing, enables forward-lean during gait, improves strength/endurance of shoulder girdle to assist head control.</p>
<p>Arm platforms</p> 	<p>Allow for shoulder/arm positioning to assist weight-bearing, enables forward-lean during gait, improves strength/endurance of shoulder girdle to assist head control.</p>
<p>Hand loops</p> 	<p>Secure, highly adjustable, positioned to provide stability and confidence while moving.</p>
<p>Handholds</p> 	<p>Adjust for comfort of hand positioning to allow for weight-bearing assist and/or maneuvering with use of upper extremities.</p>

Itemization of the Pacer Gait Trainer continued:

Item	Description of Medical Necessity
<p>Chest prompt</p> 	<p>Offers safety and support for individuals with poor trunk control.</p>
<p>Communication tray</p> 	<p>Allows for positioning of learning tools and communication systems that enhance learning, provide motivation to remain upright, and communicate basic needs.</p>
<p>Multi-Position Saddle (MPS)</p> 	<p>Allows for customized pelvic positioning. Can be adjusted in height, and forward and back, as well as into an anterior or posterior angle, with circumferential stabilization as needed. Enables optimal pelvic positioning to improve gait capability.</p>
<p>Hip positioner (includes handholds)</p> 	<p>Safety and support while allowing for movement during walking.</p>
<p>Pelvic support (includes handholds)</p> 	<p>Safety and support with minimal abduction while allowing freedom of movement during walking.</p>
<p>Thigh prompts</p> 	<p>Combines thigh and knee abduction and adduction with comfortable free-swinging motion. Helps maintain good body alignment.</p>
<p>Ankle prompts</p> 	<p>Prevents legs from crossing and controls stride length. Necessary for good body alignment.</p>
<p>Odometer caster</p> 	<p>Measures the distance ambulated in a gait training session; shows progress in step-taking and walking endurance.</p>
<p>Attendant guide bar</p> 	<p>Enables caregiver to assist forward movement of Pacer, from in front or behind. Guide bar attaches with quick-release clamp to the front tube of the standard or utility base. Required to guide Pacer movement during initial gait training.</p>

Describe other equipment previously trialed and why it didn't work:

There are various options for adult gait trainers on the market. However, each of these require transferring Jane into the device from her wheelchair – a typically strenuous process involving one or more caregivers.

Make the person real:

Secondary to her diagnoses, Jane now requires assistance for her transfers and functional mobility. Because of this, she has less opportunity to be physically active. Being in a supported upright position for standing and walking more frequently will improve Jane's respiration, digestion, circulation, bowel/bladder function, and provide the opportunity for gravity-assisted stretching, self-initiated joint ROM, improved bone density, muscle strength and weight-bearing capacity. Additionally, the upright position will place Jane at conversational height and contribute to her emotional well-being. During the trial with the Pacer, Jane stated she felt completely safe. Throughout the trial Jane was also comfortable, relaxed and confident while demonstrating a strong sense of dignity and empowerment.

Concluding paragraph restating the main points of interest:

It is my opinion, according to the evaluation and trialing of durable medical equipment for Jane, that the most effective and least costly option for safe supported standing and ambulation would be the Rifton Pacer gait trainer. This device will ensure Jane's independence, self-care, and ability to remain at home. Additionally, it will provide her with rehabilitation potential by enabling frequent opportunities for standing, gait training and recovery of gait function. The above prescribed durable medical equipment is medically necessary for this Jane's care.

Include pictures of the Rifton Pacer Gait Trainer.

Rifton Pacer Gait Trainer



Large standard Pacer K640



Large Pacer with utility base and dynamic upper K640



Large Pacer with dynamic upper and treadmill/stability base K640



Medium, Large and XL Pacers available in red, blue, gray, lime and pink.

