

Dear _____,

As the physician coordinating the peritoneal dialysis care of _____, one of your employees, I'm writing to you about individuals with kidney failure and their ability to work.

First, let me acquaint you with peritoneal dialysis. Peritoneal dialysis is a medical procedure performed several times daily to remove harmful toxins in the blood when a person's kidneys have failed and can no longer do that vital job on their own. This type of dialysis can be done by the patient in any clean, private environment—even at work. Thus, not only is kidney failure treatable, but this type of treatment, in particular, may be most compatible with the demands and schedule requirements of a job.

It is a myth that once a person starts dialysis he or she categorically cannot work. Certainly, one's age, general health, and other factors may determine physical limitations, but the range of those limitations is a vast one, indeed. Most patients will be restriction-free, and with the exception of heavy physical labor, capable of performing the specific job tasks they did before starting dialysis.

Regarding any concern you may have about the use of sick time, it may be necessary for the employee to take short-term medical leave during times of acute illness, possibly requiring a hospital stay. Those needs, however, are about as predictable as those of all your other employees. For the routine dialysis treatments each day, every attempt can be made to schedule them so as to avoid interfering with the workload. Another option, if necessary, may be to consider a modified work schedule, deemed a "reasonable accommodation" by the Americans with Disabilities Act, which does recognize kidney failure as a qualifying physical impairment.

In summary, my experience with people on dialysis is that the opportunity to continue working after starting dialysis provides the employee with economic stability, personal satisfaction, and an enhancement to the sense of well-being, as well as giving you, the employer, a willing, highly motivated, experienced member of your team.

Please don't hesitate to call if you have further questions about _____'s physical capabilities in relation to employment.

Sincerely,

_____, MD

Dear _____,

As the physician coordinating the dialysis care of _____, one of your employees, I'm writing to you about individuals with kidney failure and their ability to work.

First, let me acquaint you with dialysis. Dialysis is a medical outpatient procedure performed usually three times per week to remove harmful toxins in the blood when a person's kidneys have failed and can no longer do that vital job on their own. Thus, kidney failure is treatable.

It is a myth that once a person starts dialysis he or she categorically cannot work. Certainly, one's age, general health, and other factors may determine physical limitations, but the range of those limitations is a vast one, indeed. Most patients will be restriction-free, and with the exception of heavy physical labor, capable of performing the specific job tasks they did before starting dialysis.

Regarding any concern you may have about the use of sick time, it may be necessary for the employee to take short-term medical leave during times of acute illness, possibly requiring a hospital stay. Those needs, however, are about as predictable as those of all your other employees. For the routine dialysis treatments each week, every attempt will be made to schedule them so as to avoid interfering with the work schedule. Another option, if necessary, may be to consider a modified work schedule, deemed a "reasonable accommodation" by the Americans with Disabilities Act, which does recognize kidney failure as a qualifying physical impairment.

In summary, my experience with people on dialysis is that the opportunity to continue working after starting dialysis provides the employee with economic stability, personal satisfaction, and an enhancement to the sense of well-being, as well as giving you, the employer, a willing, highly motivated, experienced member of your team.

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