



Sample: COVID-19 Accelerated Release Letter

The following letter documents the medical rationale for recommending this patient's immediate release in response to the risks posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. A copy has been forwarded to the appropriate authority and is included in the patient's medical record.

Mr. A is a 54-year-old man with severely reduced heart function resulting from multiple heart attacks in the past. His heart is extremely weak and he uses oxygen. He also has diabetes. He has been hospitalized in the past 6 months for heart failure. He spends most of his time in bed or in a wheelchair due to shortness of breath and fatigue, and he uses a walker. He is short of breath even when at rest.

Mr. A's overall medical vulnerability and his medical conditions mean he is at extremely high risk of critical care need and mortality if he contracts COVID-19. Studies have shown that cardiac disease alone and diabetes alone each carry a significantly increased risk of death or ICU admission from COVID-19 and we estimate Mr. A's risk to be substantially higher given that he carries both of these diagnoses and his heart failure is particularly advanced.

Of note: our facility has 4 medical beds for patients in need of critical care, all of which are currently occupied. The contracted community hospital in our county has only 4 ICU beds and cases of COVID-19 have been identified in our surrounding communities.

Mr. A poses a high risk of requiring a medical bed or transfer to outside medical care even if he does not contract COVID-19. In his current stable status, Mr. A requires a weekly clinic appointment, close monitoring of his weight, frequent adjustment of medications, and twice monthly labs. Managing Mr. A's health requires significant medical resources from the correctional and community healthcare staff. These critical resources could be reallocated to the expected surge in COVID-19 cases upon Mr. A's release from custody.

Mr. A has expressed fear and increased anxiety related to a possible COVID-19 infection to his healthcare providers and appears to have changed his behavior, refusing to come out of his cell for recreation or day room and missing pill call while increasing the frequency of sick calls. These behavioral changes both elevate his risk of worsening health and/or death and increase healthcare staff time spent caring for Mr. A.

For these reasons, the healthcare team strongly recommends Mr. A's immediate release, pending an appropriate housing and medical discharge plan.