

Prescribing Assistive Devices for an Elderly Woman with Chronic Progressive Disability Living in the Community: A Case Report

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In response to a request for a commode chair with elevated foot rests for an elderly woman with post-polio syndrome (PPS) living in the community, two home visits were conducted by a physical therapist authorized to prescribe rehabilitation and mobility assistive devices. The visits indicated the need to address a wide range of limitations and disabilities due to the chronic progressive nature of PPS. Subsequently, the following assistive devices were ordered: 1. A commode chair was prescribed, to provide support for the knee at full extension during bathroom maneuvers; 2. A wheelchair was prescribed as backup for the individual's powered wheelchair; 3. A lift was ordered to enable ergonomically safe transfers; 4. A wheelchair cushion was ordered to prevent pressure sores. Additionally, request was made

for an occupational therapy consultation to evaluate the need for additional assistive devices for upper extremity activities of daily living. Furthermore, a general activity program was suggested to maintain range of motion, strength, and aerobic capacity.

Proactive monitoring of the functional status of people with chronic disabilities living in the community may prevent missing a deterioration in their functional status, and thus will allow for customized interventions that include prevention and treatment programs as well as the provision of rehabilitation and assistive devices. Such follow-up activities, which can be carried out by a physical therapist acting as a case manager, may significantly affect the quality of life of elderly individuals with disabilities living in the community.

Keywords: assistive devices, post-polio syndrome, elderly, community living, chronic disability