Information for Medical Professionals Providing Letters for Eligibility Consideration

It has become increasingly difficult for students with medical disorders to receive 504 accommodations and support from their school systems. Schools typically offer to provide an Individual Health Plan which outlines the medical requirements of the child but does not provide accommodations which are needed help the child achieve academic success when complications from the medical condition arise.

Medical information provided by the child’s physician is typically the most significant documentation that is considered for 504 eligibility for children with medical disorders. When writing letters for parents to give to the school for eligibility purposes, it is important that every possible impact of the disability is included in the documentation. Even if the child does not yet experience certain symptoms, if there are known side effects of the disability he or she experiences, they should be documented in writing for the school.

What is a 504 Plan?
A 504 plan is the collection of supports and services used to accommodate the child with a disability and enable him or her to participate in the educational environment as safely and completely as possible.

The ED Section 504 regulation defines a person with a disability as “any person who:
(i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities
(ii) has a record of such an impairment (or)
(iii) is regarded as having such an impairment.”

All qualified persons with disabilities as defined under ED Section 504 within the jurisdiction of a school district are entitled to a Free and Appropriate Public Education.

Often schools do not see the impact that eosinophilic associated disorders (EADs) has on a child because the child “crashes” after coming home from school or falls ill and is not able to attend school. Frequent absences resulting from disease flares are typically not addressed until they occur which puts an unnecessary strain on both the child and his or her family.
Symptomatic Documentation
Symptoms experienced by the child as well as potential manifestations of the disease should be documented. Additionally, it should be noted that flare-ups of EADs can unpredictably occur. Some of the important symptoms to include on school documentation for children with EADs include the following:

“Disease flares can be erratic and difficult to control”
debilitating pain
frequent medical care
malaise
fatigue
prolonged illness
reflux
food impactions
nausea
poor growth
weight loss
abdominal cramping
sleeplessness
nutritional deficiencies
loss of bowel control

Additionally, if the child is on any medications which may cause undesirable side effects including but not limited to impulse control (commonly associated with prolonged steroid use), excessive fatigue, erratic moods (commonly associated with prolonged steroid use), difficulty concentrating, etc.

Finally, if the child is on a prescribed elemental formula or restricted diet, that information needs to be included in the letter as well.