

How to Make The Most of Free Preliminary Opinions

If you haven't heard of our Free Preliminary Opinion subservice before, it's where you provide us with a brief chronology/outline of your case for the purposes of receiving a brief initial opinion from an expert specialist in relation to liability. It's to help you and your client understand whether the potential medical negligence claim is worth pursuing without running the risk of wasting valuable money, time and the emotional distress that can come with an unfavourable medical negligence report.

In order to receive a Free Preliminary Opinion from one of our expert specialists we require a chronology/outline of the case from you. As this is a free subservice, there are certain guidelines to be met in order for us to be able to accept the request.

Our specialists are doing this out of "the goodness of their hearts" and it is unfair to take advantage of them by loading them with pages upon pages of documents, or ask for a free report from them. A Free Preliminary Opinion is not a substitute for a report, but is a tool to help you and your client understand and realise the strength of the claim so you can make informed decisions about whether to pursue the matter.

Essentially a chronology that meets our guidelines and will earn the best results from our specialists is:

- No more than 3 pages in length.
- Provides a brief summary of facts surrounding the alleged negligence in question.
- Includes dates of any consultations or procedures surrounding and including the alleged negligent incident/treatment.
- Also includes valuable information regarding the plaintiff's name, age, gender, smoking status, current list of medications and weight if available.
- Provides clear instructions as to where you believe there has been negligence so that the specialist can get an understanding of where you are coming from in relation to a legal standpoint.
- May include radiological scans and images of the injury in addition to the chronology if applicable to the case.

It may be hard to provide as much detail as you can in under 3 pages, but in order for the specialist to understand the case and provide an informed opinion they require as much information surrounding the important details of the case as possible.

Medical Negligence Triage Service

Factors such as their age, gender, weight, smoking status, existing and previous medical conditions and any medications they were taking at the time of the incident can be critical. These help the specialist to provide a solid Free Preliminary Opinion without the need to move to a paid teleconference which involves reading the full brief at an hourly rate.

Scans and images are not useful in all cases and we are able to provide guidance to you about this. Examples would be failure to diagnose a break in an X-Ray, or a botched surgical procedure with an unsightly result or scarring.

Focusing on what's relevant and what's not can be difficult, especially if you're not a medical specialist yourself. In most cases relevant facts to include seems to be a good blend of the plaintiff's first-hand recount of the situation as well as notes taken from the defendant's first-hand recount/clinical notes. Preparing a Chronology/summary in the format of the sample attached will help provide a balanced account for the specialist to review.

Sometimes, especially in traumatic circumstances, certain aspects can be forgotten or repressed, which can later turn out to be vital pieces of information to help our specialists opine as to whether there is or is not negligence.



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