To whom it may concern:

This letter is written at the request of an individual with psoriatic disease in reference to application for Social Security Disability Insurance. The National Psoriasis Foundation is the world's largest organization serving people with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Psoriasis is a chronic, painful, inflammatory disease. Of the estimated 7.5 million Americans affected by psoriasis, up to 30 percent may also have psoriatic arthritis, which is often disabling and causes progressive joint damage. There is also an increased risk for psoriasis patients developing other serious conditions such as heart disease, stroke, hypertension and diabetes.

While we cannot comment on the individual's specific medical condition, the patient’s symptoms are common to what we see in psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, and can be severely disabling. Any significant movement or pressure in severe cases of psoriasis may cause affected skin to split open and bleed. Psoriasis can also affect sensitive areas such as the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, genital area or face. The mobility of patients with psoriasis on the soles of the feet is often compromised. For patients with psoriasis on the palms of the hands, even the simplest manual tasks are often impossible and extremely painful. Severe psoriatic arthritis involvement of the joints can greatly affect mobility and prevent performance of both gross and fine movements. Left untreated, psoriatic arthritis can cause irreversible joint damage.

Although psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis reveal themselves on the skin and in the joints, there is also a powerful negative effect on mental functioning. These diseases can be physically, psychologically and emotionally devastating. Additionally, psoriasis has been shown to cause as much disability as other major medical diseases, including cancer, hypertension, heart disease, diabetes and depression.

People with psoriatic disease also experience significant impact in their economic and work life. The annual cost of psoriasis in the U.S. is estimated at $135 billion due to medical expenses and lost wages. People with severe psoriasis are significantly more likely to be considered “low-income” than those with mild disease and to report that psoriasis is the reason they are not working. A quarter of people with psoriasis and almost half of people with psoriatic arthritis report that their disease negatively affects their job. Many people suffering from these diseases qualify for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits pursuant to sections 1.02, 8.05, and/or 14.09 of the Social Security “Blue Book.” Materials are enclosed that describe psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.

Please feel free to contact the National Psoriasis Foundation with any questions at education@psoriasis.org.