

February 7, 2007

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of Dr. Graeme French as I've heard that there have been grievous charges brought against him by insurance companies, lawyers, and the state medical board. Once you have heard the facts about the medical care I've received from him, it should help to dispel some of the power of these allegations. I've been an ortho/neuro/trauma nurse for 13 years so that should lend me some credibility regarding standards of medical practice. Dr. French is one of the few brilliant surgeons I've met in my career as a nurse, and I was lucky enough to find him as a patient just as my circumstances were becoming dire.

At the beginning of 1998 I had been suffering for at least 10 years with severe spasms in my neck and shoulders, particularly on the right side, and as far down my back as the lower portion of my scapulas. So much so that my cervical spine is permanently displaced to the left of midline. In the early spring of that year I had noted that my right hand grip had, over the past year become alarmingly weak. The muscles in my right hand were wasted away. I began having severe shooting nerve pain in my right forearm that left me in agony. I was receiving Physical Therapy 3 times per week, being seen once a week by an osteopath for osteopathic treatments of various kinds, and my ordering physician was a physiatrist. By early summer the pain was unbearable. My doctor became concerned and began sending me to the doctors that doctors go to see when they are sick, meaning the best Dallas Texas had to offer. I had used a hand mirror and looked at my back and neck anatomy and had noted that I appeared "deformed". Not only did I have the severe muscle spasms in my neck pushing my neck left of midline, but my shoulders subluxed at least 3 fingers width, and my scapulas winged out disproportionately. I had pointed this out to all the doctors that were working on my case and did so again and again with each new doctor I saw. First I was sent to an orthopedist, he was impressed with the severity of the muscle spasms but could find no cause. I was then sent to a Physical Medicine specialist. He too was unable to diagnose the problem. He sent me to a neurologist at Baylor hospital. He made the diagnosis of thoracic outlet syndrome, so he referred me to Dr. Urshel. Dr. Urshel is purportedly one of the best thoracic outlet syndrome surgeons in the country. Dr Urshel saw me, decided that yes, in fact I did have thoracic outlet syndrome and he put me on the surgery schedule. He based his diagnosis solely on the interview he had with me. He did not perform one medical test that would document his position. His plan was to go in surgically through my axilla and cut out my first rib. He told me that would fix the problem. It made me quite uneasy to see this doctor with a case of thoracic outlet syndrome himself, yet he did not go in for the surgery. I had heard from a friend that there was a good shoulder guy (Dr French) up in Washington State and I asked her if she thought I should see him for a second opinion before doing the surgery that was scheduled. She felt I should. I called Dr French and he spoke to me regarding my condition. He asked me numerous questions about the location of my pain, the muscle wasting in my hand and many regarding the very "deformities" I had been describing to the other physicians that had seen me. He accurately described me over the phone as if I were standing right in front of him. He said, "You don't need your rib cut out right now, I believe you need to be seen. Your shoulder may be loose and damaged and if so, repairing it would be your best option at this point. I told him I'd rather fly up to Washington to see if my shoulder indeed needed to be repaired as opposed to have someone start cutting parts out of me that I might need. I flew up to see him, he did an extensive examination, and indeed, both of my shoulders were severely damaged and in need of repair. He allowed me to see the x-rays, he answered all my questions, and educated me about all the tests he was doing in order to make the diagnosis. I asked him if I needed surgery to correct the nerves and he said that I should wait 6 months after the shoulder repair to see if just putting my right arm back into the socket would take the stretch off the nerves and correct the nerve pain I was experiencing. Take one step at a time and don't do anything more than needs to be done. I was more than willing to take his

approach. I have found Dr French to be more than conservative. The recovery from the shoulder repair alone was painful. He medicated me appropriately. He kept me out of pain enough so that I could function in my life, and also more importantly, avoid more problems down the line from not putting the shoulder through a full range of motion on account of not being comfortable enough to do so. I worked at Duke University Medical Centers pain unit for a time and am capable of discerning what doses are appropriate and which are not. Dr. French is well within the bounds of good medical practice.

Six months later, the symptoms had not let up enough to live with, and so I flew back for a neurolysis on the upper trunk of the right brachial plexus and a total shoulder repair on the left. When he opened me up to do the neurolysis he found a mess. Nerves were scarred to muscles, blood vessels, my rib, etc. He did an excellent job at protecting the nerve tissue while removing them from their formerly scarred down position. Was I in pain postoperatively? You bet!! As a nurse, I understand that when you damage nerves badly to the point of demyelination and fasciculation as a result of being scarred down for years on end, the recovery is going to be ugly. And that is where I think patients are being led astray by lawyers that want to make a buck. They jump in 6 weeks post op and tell the patient they should be pain free. Anyone who is any good at orthopedic medicine should realize that full recovery takes up to a year and sometimes longer. My recovery did take that long. And I was in pain every single day. Dr. French again provided me with enough medication to keep me as comfortable as someone can be given the extent of the damage he found. I obtained full range of motion with both arms within 12 weeks. I finally did begin PT on the continued advise of Dr. French and the Physical Therapist was extremely impressed with my progress. That progress was hard won. Dr. French medicated me appropriately and I had the grit to do what it took to make sure that despite the remaining pain, I achieved full range. That wasted hand now has a 90# handgrip, that arm threw sticks and Frisbees for my dog, I leash trained my dog with that arm and I could carry numerous grocery bags at one time. My pain finally calmed down to where I only needed Darvocet-N 100 to control the pain. But it took almost 9 months to a year.

In the year 2001 I called Dr. French as I was again loosing sensation in my right hand and experiencing nerve pain. My neck was still in spasm though not as bad. I flew out to Washington and he put me through another set of diagnostic tests and he determined that there must be more scarring in the lower trunk of the brachial plexus that needed to be released. He went in and found that the plexus was severely scarred from where he did the first surgery all the way down into my axilla and on down my arm as far as he could reach. It was by far the most grueling of all the surgeries I'd had. He took color pictures of the nerves so that I could see for myself the damage that was present. Again the demyelinated and fasciculate nerves were present at the surgical site. My recovery was long and painful, and my arm had limited range of motion due to the nerves being worked on. Again Dr. French managed my pain medication, keeping me comfortable enough to function and work the arm in order to achieve full range. It took over a year for that to occur. The reoccurring theme here is that nerve surgery hurts! It takes time to heal! And the patient has to be willing to work at their recovery. Not run to a lawyer!

At the present time, I am involved with training dogs in obedience lessons, some of them powerful breeds weighing over 100#s. I am able to run every aspect of my life without help. My arm functions fully with the exception of some easy fatigueability during certain activities. My handgrip is strong. The muscle spasms in my neck are less than 15% of what they used to be if I am reasonable with my activity. I truly consider what Dr. French did with my arm nothing short of a miracle. As damaged as my plexus was, for me to come out of that the way I did is a blessing. I am in pain every day. That is the result of severely damaged nerves. I am under pain management in my current hometown and my pain doctor prescribes exactly the same dosage as Dr. French did. As a nurse, I have a full understanding of what condition I would be in today if Dr Urshel were allowed to take my rib out through my armpit. I'd have not had the use of my arm. I credit the fact that I have the full use of both of my arms to Graeme French. He is an excellent, conservative, compassionate and caring surgeon that performs cutting edge surgery that is not at all easy to find. I have had to fly across the entire United

States just to get the best care available. I shutter to think what the quality of my life would have been had I not met him. I feel truly blessed to have had him as my surgeon!

Jeri Skinner
Former Patient



Atlantic **ORTHOPEDICS**, PA
PAIN MEDICINE DIVISION

OPIOID MONOGRAPH

Atlantic Orthopedics, PA is considering prescribing an opiate medication to help reduce your pain. Before your physician does this you will be asked to adhere to a medication contract. Part of that contract involves understanding what opiate medication is.

Opiates are pain medications that resemble opium. Opium is a chemical used for thousands of years to control pain. It is found in Asian poppy plants. Most patients have taken some opiates to control their pain such as Ultram, Ultracet, Darvocet, Vicodin, Percocet, Demerol, Methadone, Morphine, Levodromoran, Oxycodone, Dilaudid, and others.

Opiates work by binding to receptor sites on cells in the brain and spinal cord. The human brain actually makes its own chemicals that bind to these receptors. These chemicals are called endorphins and encephalins. Opiates bind to the same receptor sites and change the way your brain and spinal cord process pain signals. Your pain is then reduced.

There are many side effects to opiates. The most common two are sedation and constipation. There are many other side effects including nausea, difficulty urinating, sweating, dizziness, difficulty swallowing, wheezing, decreased appetite, itching & dry mouth. Frequently, you may have side effects with one type of opiate but not with a different one.

The biggest fear for patient and physician with opiate use is that of addiction. Most people don't realize that addiction is a mental problem. Very few patients treated for medical problems become addicts unless they have had previous problems controlling their drug or alcohol usage.

I define addiction as the compulsive (obsessive) use of a drug which results in physical, psychological, or social harm to the patient and an insistence by the patient on continued use despite that harm.

The vast majority of patients who take opiates will not become addicted. They will become physically dependent. Physical Dependency means, that if you stop the drug suddenly you will suffer an abstinence syndrome. This may include diarrhea, cramping, flu like symptoms, muscle aches, rapid heartbeat, and/or sweating. This withdrawal can be avoided by weaning (reducing the dose a little each day) over a 2 week period of time.

Using opiates to control pain is controversial. Many physicians believe it is better to suffer than to take morphine. Some physicians believe you can be taught to live with your pain. Others feel that pain is in your mind and you can be taught to ignore it. I have been more impressed with how narcotics have made many patients more functional and comfortable.

If you cannot adhere to our contract or if I feel the drugs are harming you, I will stop prescribing them after weaning you off. This happens less than 10% of the time with my patients. Not everyone is helped but many are.

You are encouraged to ask questions and to seek a second medical opinion.
If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Francis Pecoraro.

Atlantic  ORTHOPEDICS, PA
Pain Medicine Division
Narcotic Medication Agreement

Patient's Name: Jeri Skinner MR#: 124741

Controlled substances, such as narcotics, tranquilizers, and barbiturates are very useful in managing pain but have high potential for misuse. They are intended to relieve pain specifically to improve function and/or ability to work, not simply to feel good. Because my physician is prescribing these medications, I agree to the following conditions:

1. I am responsible for managing my controlled substance medications. If the prescription is lost, misplaced, or stolen, or if I use it up sooner than prescribed, I understand that it will not be replaced.
2. I will not request or accept controlled substance medication from any other physician or individual while I am receiving medication from Atlantic Orthopedics, PA. I understand that obtaining controlled substances by more than one physician group is illegal. I also understand that law enforcement officials have specific authority to view controlled substance orders from a physician at any time without my consent.
3. I will not request early medication refills. I will request prescription refills only during office visits. I will not request early medication refills if I lose a prescription or spill/misplace the medication. It is my responsibility to safeguard my medications from being stolen, lost, misplaced, or destroyed.
4. I agree to comply with random, or specifically requested, urine, blood, or breath testing, as well as random pill counts to verify the proper use of my medications and to confirm my non use of illicit drugs.
5. I agree that if another person tells me that I am impaired or if I think I am impaired by my medication, I will not drive a motor vehicle or operate any other heavy machinery.
6. I further understand that driving a motor vehicle may not be allowed at times while I am taking controlled substances. It is my responsibility to comply with state laws while taking these medications.
7. I agree to waive any applicable privilege or right of privacy or confidentiality with respect to the prescribing of my pain medication.
8. I understand that medication side effects including sedation, itching, nausea, vomiting, difficulty urinating, dry mouth, dental disease, teeth loss, depression, impaired sexual function, mood swings, liver dysfunction and constipation are possible. I also understand that in addition to the side effects above, the potential of respiratory depression or even death exists from taking these medications. If I feel very sleepy, I will not overtake these medications, even if my pain level or other problems are very great. I further understand that a possibility of addiction and the probability of physical dependence exist, and I consent to assume all of these risks.
9. I understand that suddenly stopping this medication may result in withdrawal syndrome. I have been told not to do so.
10. I further agree that my narcotics prescription may be stopped or my medication dosage decreased at any time for any reason by any health care provider indicated below.
11. If for any reason I am unable to take any of my prescribed narcotic prescriptions I must return all unused medications to Atlantic Orthopedics, PA.
12. I will only use one pharmacy to purchase my prescribed narcotic medications, which I have listed below.
13. Controlled substances will not be filled or refilled by telephone I must present to Atlantic Orthopedics, PA for all refills of controlled substances.
14. I understand that violating any of the conditions of this agreement may result in dismissal from Atlantic Orthopedics.

Jeri Skinner
Print name above


Signature

Today's date: 12/12/06 Physician's signature: _____

→ Pharmacy Name: Walgreens Location: College / 17th corner of
(793-5740)

February 13, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

I initially met and was seen by Dr. Harold Graeme French for evaluation following a visit and a referral by Dr. Kim Mellor of Whitman Medical Clinic in April of 1999.

Prior to my first evaluation by Dr. French, I had been involved in a number of automobile accidents and was suffering from arm pain, shoulder pain, weakness in my left arm, headaches and neck pain. I could not sleep. I had been to several physicians in Spokane to include those at the Rockwood Clinic. I was sent to physical therapy, was evaluated for MS and even a possible tumor on my spinal cord. In the end I was told they could find nothing wrong. I was told it was stress as my mother was dying of cancer. My pain did not diminish I just had to live with it.

In April 1999 I was involved in another auto accident. I had slid off a road in slush. A van following me also slid off the road. The van rearended me, flipped and came down on top of my car sliding off my trunk. My pain exacerbated. As my husband and I were living in Colfax, Washington at the time, I went to Whitman Hospital and Medical Center for whiplash pain and to Dr. Mellor for treatment. Dr. Mellor referred me to Dr. French.

Following an examination, Dr. French told me I had a left shoulder multidirectional instability, a brachial plexus injury and a probable torn labrum. He taped my shoulder for the instability and sent me to physical therapy. Following physical therapy my shoulder continued to get worse and the weakness progressed. My arm felt like it was continually falling out of joint and I was unable to walk with it at my side. My headaches increased in frequency and in severity as well as my neck pain. Finally in November of 1999 it was decided arthroscopy and reconstruction was warranted. Dr. French ordered an occupational therapy evaluation and sensory mapping of my arms and hands. This was completed on 12/7/1999.

I had surgery on 12/9/1999. My left shoulder immediately felt much better. I was able to walk with my arm at my side. I was able to talk on the telephone without the receiver being too heavy and causing severe pain. I was able to carry a gallon of milk. My left arm felt normal again.

I continued to have headaches and neck pain. Eventually I could not turn my head, look up or down without severe pain due to muscle spasms in my neck. Dr. French felt my headaches were a result of aggravation of a mild occipital nerve entrapment caused by the auto accident in April 1999. He injected my occipital nerve and my headaches were


relieved for a time. As time progressed so did my neck pain. I had more physical therapy. Physical therapy did not help. I continued to have headaches and neck pain. I did not sleep well, sometimes waking up every hour to reposition due to neck and arm pain. I continued to see Dr. French and in September 2000 he decided I needed another OT evaluation and cervical MRI. The cervical MRI showed degenerative disease at C4-5 with a mild broad based posterior annular bulge. I continued to see Dr. French for injections to relieve head and neck pain and finally in January 2002 I had an MRI of my brachial plexus showing thickening of the trunks, cords, divisions and branches of the left brachial plexus. I had brachial plexus surgery in February 2002. Surgery was extremely painful with a painful recovery. Dr. French followed me closely and prescribed Neurontin to help with the nerve pain. By controlling the nerve pain I was able to return to work in a short amount of time. Since having this surgery I no longer have severe headaches and I can turn my head in either direction. I continue to have neck pain but that is due to degeneration of the discs and I have been referred to Dr. Larson.

I have been a patient of Dr. French for over 8 years. He since then has also fixed my right shoulder twice (it felt so good a week after the first surgery I overdid it and ripped the repair out).

I have the utmost respect for and confidence in Dr. French and his work. I would refer my family and friends to him anytime for treatment. I feel he did not rush me into surgery but gave me a chance to heal and progress with physical therapy. It was only after I did not continue to progress he agreed to do surgery.

I would be happy to visit with anybody regarding my surgeries and progress. I feel Dr. French has helped to make my life normal again.

Sincerely,



Judy Young

3415 Clemans Road
Clarkston, Wa. 99403

To Whom It May Concern:

I first met Dr. H. Graeme French almost twenty years ago. My stepson, Nicholas Stevens, was injured in a football accident at school in the fall of 1987. Other parents at our school in Asotin, Washington recommended that we take him to see Dr. French because of his medical expertise and his kindness and compassion. Dr French examined him, told my wife and I what was needed, and after getting our approval, gave him the care he needed. After the bones healed we took Nick back to have the cast removed and Dr French checked him out and released him. Nick hasn't ever had any more trouble with that hand because of the quality of care he got from Dr French.

We told everyone we had an occasion to discuss it with, how good and kind Dr French was and of all the people we talked to that consulted with him, we never once heard anyone say that they weren't completely satisfied with his care and his manner.

In March of 1997 I went to see him for a shoulder injury I sustained. He gave me complete caring care for my injury, going so far as to say I needed therapy before I was able to get the best result from a surgery. I had the therapy, and then the surgery when I was ready for it, and I have had excellent results. My range of motion is far superior to the range of motion of some of my acquaintances who had shoulder surgery by other surgeons (before I met them or I would have driven them to Dr French). I actually can touch my fingertips behind my back (over and under) since my surgery, something I haven't been able to do since I was much younger. After my shoulder surgery my grip strength in my right hand was approximately 27 pounds, then following the subsequent Brachial Release surgery it improved to over 80 pounds. I don't know of anyone who has gotten anywhere near those kind of results from other surgeons who don't have the foresight (or skill or desire) to see that their patients get that extra measure of treatment.

Dr French is a man of extreme strength of character who puts himself on the line everyday so he can help other people. Why do you suppose he does what he does? He sure doesn't do it so he can have the finest of offices and the fanciest of facilities to work in, have you ever seen his Pullman office? He does it because of the type of man and Doctor he is and because it is more important to him to help others than to follow the crowd and do only what everyone else does. That is why when you are waiting in his waiting room, you can talk to people from all over the west coast who come to see him because he is the best there is at what he does.

I believe that we are blessed to have a Doctor of his caliber in our area and I hope and pray he will be here practicing and helping people who need him for many, many more years. Without him we would be much poorer and left without a critical resource we need to maintain our health.

Sincerely,



Carl E. Phillips

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Subject: Results of Shoulder Surgery performed on Phillips S Baker
By H Graeme French MD on 11/06/2001 in Colfax WA

Dr French performed surgery on my left shoulder 11/06/2001 at Whitman Hospital in Colfax, WA. Over five years after the surgery, my left shoulder has full movement and greater flexibility than my right shoulder which has had no treatment. The operation relieved me of constant pain in my left shoulder that had been getting more severe each year.

Prior to visiting Dr French in 8/2001, my left shoulder had been bothering me noticeably beginning in the 1980's. I had pain when I exercised (did pushups, played basketball). Each year the pain would be more severe and would occur with less movement. I had gotten to the point that I could not raise my left arm to my left ear because of pain. I could not reach the back of my neck when it itched. I was unable to reach my back trouser pocket. Perhaps, I could have with painkillers, but the pain was so severe that I dared not attempt any of those maneuvers. I could not use my left arm to turn over in bed. I was miserable. Had I been working (I am retired) there would have been days when I could not have performed because of the pain.

Dr French's father suggested that I might visit Dr French in August 2001. Dr French had me go to an imaging clinic. He reviewed my condition with me and recommended that I have what is described in the statement documents as "arthroscopic, ant & post capsular shift + rotator cuff repair +SLAP". We set a date in November. I liked the idea of arthroscopic—other doctors make large incisions which I really wanted to avoid. I was convinced that Dr French was the doctor I wanted when I spoke with a stranger at the lunch room at Qualchan Golf Course in Spokane who told me that he got his life back after being operated on by Dr French.

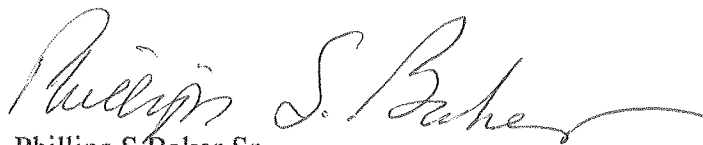
The was performed on 11/06/2001 about noon and that evening I rode the 60 miles from Colfax to Spokane in a car and went into a pharmacy to sign for my prescriptions. For two days and nights I sat up in a lounge chair at my son's home and watched TV. Although I had a morphine pump, I did not use it. Within a week I flew to my home just outside of Austin TX. The only therapy I performed was a pulley weighted with water that I used to move my left arm up and down behind my back. I played racquetball three weeks after the operation. I played golf three months after the operation. I think I called Dr French's office twice during the year after the operation to let him know how I was doing. I did visit him during the summer of 2002.

I am completely pain free and have greater flexibility with my left arm than my right.

Subject: Results of Shoulder Surgery performed on Phillips S Baker
By Dr H Graeme French on 11/06/2001 in Colfax WA (Continued)

Dr French has made life much better for me by giving me the ability to use my left arm freely and effectively with no pain. I have recommended Dr French to several friends who needed shoulder surgery, but they didn't want to travel to Colfax WA. Believe me it was worth the travel. Thanks to Dr French and his father. I think Dr French is an accomplished and talented medical doctor and surgeon.

Should anyone want additional information I am available at 512-864-3684.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Phillips S Baker". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Phillips S Baker Sr
911 Lindero Pass
Georgetown TX 78628

