If you want to include a non-VA doctor’s report as part of your claim:

* Their report or letter must follow the VA elements for a “competent medical claim.”
* The VA will likely schedule an examination appointment with one of their doctors to confirm your physician’s report.
* It is usually a good idea to see a civilian doctor before seeing a VA doctor
  + The civilian doctor will not be free
  + The VA doctor will be free

**All physician reports for VA benefits should include:**

* A statement by the medical professional that explains their qualifications to provide medical diagnoses, statements, or opinions
  + Qualifications include education, training, and/or experience
* Notes of the veteran’s personal experience with his/her persistent and recurrent symptoms of the disability
* A complete review of all medical records and other relevant documents
  + Using the past records and important facts from the veteran’s history makes the claim stronger
  + The statement, “I have reviewed the pertinent records in the VA claims file” shows that the medical professional has reviewed the medical records. This statement should be included in the report.
* A discussion of the veteran’s limitations
  + The medical professional’s judgment of the limitations should be included when possible
* A medical diagnosis for the symptoms that the veteran is experiencing
* Copies of medical records, test results, or other supporting documentation
* Any articles, treatises, or textbook excerpts that support the finding that the diagnosis is supported by the veteran’s symptoms
* A statement regarding the likely cause of the injury or disease