



ALBEMARLE GASTROENTEROLOGY ASSOCIATES
Board Certified in Gastroenterology

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter at the request of the Corporate Governance of the Natren Company a manufacturer of probiotics to share my clinical and personal experiences in using their proprietary probiotic Trenev Trio. I am practicing as a solo Gastroenterologist in North Carolina and I have been practicing since 1990. I received my medical degree from the University of Geneva in Italy. I subsequently obtained a residency in internal medicine at Lenox Hill in New York City. I was very fortunate to befriend Dr. Borton Korelitz a pioneer in the field of inflammatory bowel disease and chief of the department of gastroenterology. He himself was a student of Dr. Crohn who coined the name Crohn's disease back in the 1930s-1940s at Mount Sinai Medical School. I was fortunate enough to obtain a GI fellowship under Dr. Korelitz and studied with him during my 2 years of GI fellowship. I studied extensively patients with inflammatory bowel disease. At that same time I was also able to study with Dr. Jerry Wayne who is considered the father of and pioneered colonoscopy as a tool for diagnostic and therapeutic gastrointestinal diseases and was chief of endoscopy at Lenox Hill hospital and Mount Sinai. After several years of practice it was clear to me that one of the greatest burdens as a gastroenterologist was trying to address, treat, and improve the quality of life of patients with irritable bowel syndrome. I was fortunate enough in the year 2000 to attend a meeting on nutritional medicine where I was first introduced to the terms probiotic and dysbiosis. After that meeting it became clear to me that there might be a link between IBS, gut bacteria, and an imbalance or dysbiosis causing symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome. This became a personal passion of mine to investigate this further in 2000. Gastroenterologists as a group were not aware of this relationship nor probiotics or how they worked. As I performed my own due diligence on the subject I found several papers from the 1950s, 1960s that appeared to show a correlation between irritable bowel patients and abnormality of their gut flora and in fact more precisely the absence of Lactobacillus significant bacteria in patients who suffer the classical IBS symptoms. It was at this time after having been introduced to several nutritional companies through my interest in nutritional medicine that I began using one of the proprietary probiotics for literally hundreds of my IBS patients. Initially as a doubting Thomas I wrote a letter to the editor Dr. Martin Floch regarding my observations of patients improvement in symptoms including gas, bloating, diarrhea, constipation, and abdominal discomfort after treatment with probiotics. At that time I requested permission from Dr. Douglas Drossman the Chief of Gastroenterology at UNC Chapel Hill whom many consider one of the forefathers of irritable bowel syndrome. I requested permission to use his statistical instruments to measure the results of my IBS patient population and their response to probiotics. After collecting the data it was clear that the data showed by statistical science that patients were in fact experiencing a benefit from probiotics with regard to quality of life and improvement in IBS symptoms. After

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several attempts submitting abstracts to the American college of gastroenterology and the American gastroenterological association in 2003 the abstract was accepted for presentation at ACG with the statistical benefit being demonstrated. Soon after the abstract presentation there seemed to be a small interest that developed and several other contributors also had studied benefits of probiotics in IBS patients. I was subsequently interviewed by medline and soon after was asked to join the medical advisory board of gastroenterology and endoscopy news and subsequently wrote several articles on the subject of probiotics, IBS, and dysbiosis, and I continue to learn about new Probiotics.

A few years ago I was introduced to the Natren company and their Proprietary Probiotics. It was clear to me after reading the very insightful book on Probiotics by Natasha Trenev and after having performed the due diligence that I had on choosing the best of breed probiotics the Natren company met and exceeded the published standards for the best probiotics and using the Proprietary Blend Natrens Trenev Trio on my patients they continue to benefit.

Natren provided me with 3rd party analytical studies of these strains and their biological characteristics of the strains to substantiate them as true beneficial bacteria when introduced to the human GI Tract. It is no longer a leap of faith to understand how so many people have benefited and hopefully continue to benefit from these organisms not only IBS patients but many inflammatory states for example C. difficile colitis infectious irritable bowel syndrome, patients with viral or bacterial gastroenteritis patients with food intoxication/food poisoning which is more and more prevalent in this society. So many over the counter probiotics that are being commercially advertised to the public eye may not in fact meet the rigorous requirements and criteria that are well documented and established for best probiotics unfortunately many of us as physicians do not have the time or the ability to do the due diligence necessary in this area. For this reason it is important as a patient as well as a clinician when recommending a probiotic to at least attempt to speak to other colleagues or have adopted a passion for this area without a bias opinion and without financial incentive or conflict of interest. This would be the time to make it clear that I do not have any financial interests or payment from Natren from my pts who receive the probiotics.

In summary this field is still in its renaissance I believe and I can only hope that in the years to come will come the clarity the of mechanisms of action and better transparency of understanding and effectiveness of these organisms and how they work in the human gut. The Natren Company and Natasha have truly been the pioneer in education and research in this area and I completely support their efforts and claims of the clinical benefits of their probiotics and look forward to further studies using their strains in various GI diseases and hoping to reach the greater gastroenterology community who are always looking to newer modalities to treat their patients and improving their quality of life.

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