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Dear Dr. \_\_\_\_\_,

Our mutual patient, \_\_\_\_\_, is being followed in our office for chronic inflammatory periodontal (gum) disease. The presence of pathologic bacterial in the gingival pocket between the tooth and gum has resulted in a long-standing bacterial-based infection. These bacteria erode the bone support around the teeth, which leads to tooth loss and decreased oral functioning. Periodontal treatment is aimed at eliminating this chronic infection by removing the causative bacteria from the pocket areas. The eroded bone can also often be repaired to restore proper tooth support and, thus, lengthen the functional life of the patient's dentition.

Current research is confirming a link between common gum disease and heart disease. The presence of gum disease makes it twice as likely for patients to have a fatal heart attack. When gums are inflamed, the bacteria and inflammatory mediators of periodontal origin do enter the bloodstream daily and can participate in the arteriosclerotic process. We have evidence that gum disease increases the C-reactive protein levels and the elimination of gum disease results in an impressive reduction in CRP levels.

With this patient's other cardiovascular risk factors in mind, we are taking a more aggressive approach in this case to eliminate any gum inflammation. Periodontal disease is often described as a "silent disease" similar to hypertension. It provides few symptoms and rarely causes discomfort. The easiest recognizable sign is gum bleeding during brushing or flossing. Healthy gums do not bleed at all when cleaned. Visible soft tissue inflammation and oral malodor are also important signs. We will take good care of \_\_\_\_\_ to eliminate periodontal infection and then maintain the preferred level of oral health once it is achieved.

Warmest Regards,

Drs. Allison and Hulihan and Our Dental Hygienists